# AN APPEAL

To the GENUINE

## *Records* and *Teſtimonies*

OF

## Heathen and Jewiſh WRITERS;

IN

## *Defence of* CHRISTIANITY,

By THOMAS DAWSON, D. D. Vicar of *New Windſor*; ſome Time Member of *Convocation*.

PART I.

1. An *Appeal* to the Works of *Phlegon*, *Thallus*, and other *Heathen* Writers; as Evidence for the *miraculous Eclipſe* at Chriſt's Paſſion.

2. An *Appeal* to the *Chineſe* Records; proving *that* Eclipſe to be *Univerſal*, as well as *Supernatural*.

3. An *Appeal* to the Confeſſion made by the Emperor *Titus*, of the *miraculous* Proceedings of Heaven in the *final Deſtruction* of *Jeruſalem*; atteſted by *Tacitus* and *Joſephus*; which was fulfilling the *Prophecy* made by Chriſt, (*Luke* xxi. 24.) with which *Prophecy* PHLEGON was acquainted.

4. An *Appeal* to the *preſent* Deſolation of *Jeruſalem*; as concerning *another Prophecy* of Chriſt, (*Luke* xxi. 24.) which is YET accompliſhing, *viz.* That *Jeruſalem ſhould not be rebuilt*, "*till the* "*Times of the Nations be fulfilled*.

5. An *Appeal* to the Emperor *Julian*'s Attempts to rebuild the *Temple* at *Jeruſalem*, that he might elude that *Prophecy*; as alſo to the *Miracles* that attended the Attempt; as related by *Amm. Marcellinus*, and other unqueſtionable Authors.

PART II.

1. A *Defence* of the ſeveral Teſtimonies of *Phlegon*, *Thallus*, *Jul. Africanus*, &c. concerning the *miraculous* Eclipſe at Chriſt's Paſſion, againſt the late Objections made by Dr. *STKES*.

2. The *different* Supputation of *Years* about Chriſt's *Death* plainly adjuſted; and thereby Dr. *S*'s greateſt Objection to *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony entirely remov'd.

3. The *Expreſſions* of ſeveral ancient Writers, concerning the *miraculous* Darkneſs at Chriſt's Paſſion, *compar'd* one with the other; and thence ſhewn, that ſuch Darkneſs at Chriſt's Paſſion was *Univerſal*.

4. A farther *Appeal* to the *Chineſe* Records, for proving the *Univerſality* of ſuch Darkneſs; taken from the Teſtimonies of P. *Bouvet*, and his Adverſary P. *Gaublin*; as alſo from other Authentick Accounts lately tranſmitted to the *Royal Society*.

5. Two *Teſt Paſſages*, taken from *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, propos'd to the Conſideration of Dr. *S.* and ſpeedy Juſtice required to be done to thoſe injur'd *Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

*LONDON*:
Printed for RICHARD WARE, at the *Bible and Sun* in *Amen-Corner*. 1733.

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# AN APPEAL

To the GENUINE

## *Records* and *Teſtimonies*

OF

## Heathen and Jewiſh WRITERS;

BEING

## Full EVIDENCE

FOR THE

TRUTH of the *Chriſtian Religion*, and its *Primitive* Doctrines.

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In Several CONFERENCES.

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PART I.

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*The Truth at the Bottom is plainly this: All the great Things that modern* Deiſts *affect to ſay of* Right Reaſon, *as to its* Sufficiency *in diſcovering the Obligations and Motives of* Morality, *is only a* Pretence *to be made uſe of, when* they *are oppoſing* Chriſtianity.

Dr. *Clarke* in his *Boyle's* Lectures.

*Refrain not to ſpeak, when there is Occaſion to do good: Strive for the Truth unto Death, and the Lord ſhall fight for thee.* [Eccluſ. iv. 23, 28.]

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*LONDON:*

Printed by S. ARIS, for L. GILLIVER, at *Homer's-Head* in *Fleet-Street*. M.DCC.XXX.

[Price 1 *s.* 6 *d.*]



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# APPEAL

To Her GRACE

THE

# Dutcheſs-Dowager of St. *Albans*

(An Eminent Example of true Piety)

The following

# TREATISE,

*With all poſſible Reſpect,*

*Is Dedicated by*

*Her Very Humble Servant,*

T. D.

# THE PREFACE.

IT *would be very abſurd, to make the leaſt* Apology *for publiſhing the following Sheets; which are intended for the Service of* true Primitive Chriſtianity. *'Tis certain, the* Spirit *of* Infidelity *is gone forth, and ſeems to rage with uncommon Violence amongſt us: But, alas! where's the* controuling Power,* *that has* beſt *ſerved, in ſeveral Ages of the* Chriſtian Church, to rebuke it? *I ſay no more; but the* Power *is no longer felt, nor heard of in our* Sion. *'Tis true, an eminent* Prelate *has done Wonders that Way: God proſper his Labours! But in the Opinion of moſt, 'tis too* ſore *an* Evil, *we labour under, to be* cur'd *by a* ſingle *Hand; how skilful and maſterly ſoever* it *may be: However, ſince this is the* Method *our* Superiors *judge beſt for us to take, I have ventured to inliſt myſelf under* his Lordſhip's *Protection; and to contribute my Mite, in a* glorious Cauſe, *which all good People muſt have at Heart: And let our Adverſaries but follow the* Rule, *which they preſcribe to others, in* uſing thoſe Faculties which God has given us

* A *National* Synod.

us to judge with, after the beſt Manner we can, the End will be truly anſwered; *and* Victory *ſoon appear to be on our Side: The* Facts *appeal'd to in the preſent* Tract, (*ſupported by unqueſtionable* Authority) *are an undeniable* Proof *that the* Goſpel-Revelation *came from God; and conſequently, that our* Reaſon alone *is not a ſufficient* Guide *to eternal Happineſs: For if the* Premiſes *are true, then the* Inference *which the ſame eminent Prelate has made, muſt be true alſo,* viz. "*When by the Help of our Reaſon Re-*"*velation becomes ſo eſtabliſh'd; no Sug-*"*geſtion either againſt the* Need *of ſuch a*"*Revelation, or againſt our* Obligation *to*"*receive it, ought to make any Impreſſion*"*upon us: For indeed to ſuppoſe that God*"*makes a Revelation that is* needleſs, *is a*"*direct Impeachment of his* Wiſdom; *and*"*to affirm that we are not bound to attend*"*to, and receive it, when made, is no leſs*"*an Impeachment of his* Authority." *Our* Deiſts *and other* Reaſon-Mongers *do indeed make a great Noiſe at preſent about* Morality; *not conſidering, how much they are beholden, as well as many old Philoſophers were, to the* Holy Scriptures *themſelves, for the* beſt *Things they ſay about* it. *'Tis certain, the Apoſtate* Julian *underſtood much better what* Morality *is, than the infamous* Set *of our bungling* Free-thinkers: *He was for ingrafting into his ſubtle, pernicious* Syſtem, *even the* Order *and external* Diſcipline *of the* Chriſtian *Church, as*

*well*

*well as thoſe* Graces *and* Virtues *that diſtinguiſh'd its Members from the reſt of the World: But* thoſe *among our ſelves, who wou'd be thought to* refine *upon* Julian's *Schemes, are really* confounding *the very* Notions *that Mankind has ever had of the* Being *and* Attributes *of God: For whilſt they are very copious (ſhall I ſay laviſh?) in extolling his* Goodneſs, *the better to ſecure (as they imagine) a* full Swing *in Prophaneneſs and Debauchery, they are diveſting him of his* Juſtice *and* Holineſs; *nay, ſo very ſhort and defective are they in their* New-fangled *Scheme, that the very Name of* Repentance *is not allow'd to have any Share in* it; *and no other* Rule *is left us to* walk *by, but our own* corrupted *Reaſon. God, in his due Time, deliver us from ſuch deſtructive Schemes!* deſtructive, *whether in regard to* Church *or* State; *for* they *naturally reſolve themſelves into* Libertiniſm *and downright* Atheiſm; *and there is no one* Maxim *better eſtabliſh'd than this,* That where there is no true Fear of God, there can be no true Allegiance paid to Man.

*In another* Tract (*which, God willing, will ſoon follow* this) *the Reader will find* that *remarkable Verſe in St.* John, There are three that bear Witneſs in Heaven, *&c.* [1 Ep. v. 7.] *fully vindicated from the many* Cavils *and* Objections *rais'd againſt* it; *and the* Genuineneſs *of the* Text *prov'd indiſputably; I ſhou'd think, beyond all Contradiction. Providence, it ſeems, has been*

*pleas'd*

*pleas'd to bring to Light a* Manuſcript *about* twelve hundred *Years old, found in the Library at* Verona, *a few Years ago*, [1720.] *taken Notice of, as* loſt, *by Dr.* Cave, *written by that able Senator* Aurelius Caſſiodorus, *intituled,* Complexiones in Epiſtolas, *&c. publiſh'd by* Maffeius, (*well known to the learned World,*) *with his own excellent* Annotations; *and the* whole *is ſupported with all the* Authority *that an obſtinate* Heretick *can require: For it appears from ſeveral Places in this* Work, *that* Caſſiodorus *did uſe another* Verſion *than* that *of St.* Jerom, *where the* Verſe *has been ſuppos'd to have been foiſted in: And 'tis as evident, that this* Verſe *was not only read in the* Copies *belonging to the* African *Church, but in* thoſe *alſo the moſt* ancient *and moſt* correct *in the* Roman *or* Weſtern *Churches. To this will be added another Sort of* Proof *for eſtabliſhing the ſame* Text, *given us by the late learned Dr.* Cave, *Canon of* Windſor, *being Part of his* Hiſtoria Literaria, *but is yet in* Manuſcript. *The* Paſſage *was occaſion'd by the Doctor's Obſervations upon* Lucian's Philopatris; *and as he ſeems to have manag'd* it *in a Manner different from other Writers, ſo perhaps more for the Advantage of the* Text *he defended.*

*I have nothing more to add, than to remind every good* Chriſtian, *how much it behoves them, in theſe perillous Days, to be frequent at the Throne of* Grace, *in behalf of that excellent* Religion *they profeſs; that*

God

*God wou'd bleſs the Labours of ſuch who do or ſhall go forth in* its *Defence*; *in keeping People's Minds from* being toſs'd to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine, *and in getting their* Hearts eſtabliſh'd *in the* Saving Truths *of the* Goſpel. *This is promoting true Religion: And 'tis thus our Church has taught us to pray* (*God hear our Petitions!*) *that we may* hold the Unity of our Faith in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteouſneſs of Life. *Amen.*

*T. D.*

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CON-

# CONFERENCE I.

*A.* SIR, well met: You are welcome into the Country; I hope you are now come to make some Stay amongst us.

*B.* Sir, I am glad to see you well: As to my Stay here, 'twill be (as usual) during the long Vacation; and then Business calls me to Town again.

*A.* I am sorry, you can't give us more of your Company; for our *Monthly* Meetings in these Parts have suffer'd pretty much by your Absence. The *Society* are much indebted to you for your good Instructions, and are very sensible of your Abilities to serve them in the common Cause of Christianity: However, they are satisfy'd, as I am, that you make the best Amends for the Loss of your Company, by your constant Attendance on the greater Society above, for promoting those Ends which they and we have so much at heart.

*B.* I suppose you *mean* the *Society for propagating Christian Knowledge*, &c. Some thing or other has diverted my Thoughts another Way; I have not been amongst 'em a great while.

*A.* What ſay you? Do you only *ſuppoſe* I mean —— I could not have thought, there had been any need of *explaining* my ſelf; and I am very ſorry to hear you now mention that *Society*, with ſo much Coolneſs and Indifferency.

*B.* To deal frankly with you; I am now become a Member of *another Society*; and they are Men of a quite different *Stamp*. Let me tell you; 'tis a Society that is juſtly diſtinguiſh'd by their Politeneſs, Learning, and good Reaſoning; 'tis *there* that I have aſſociated my ſelf, and I am reſolv'd to continue a Member, unleſs it can be ſhewn, that I am in an Error, by being of this *new* Opinion.

*A.* If this be your Caſe, I'll venture to ſay thus much to you at preſent, that it very nearly behoves you to make a ſpeedy, ſerious, and impartial Enquiry, whether this *new Opinion* of yours be well grounded, or no; for if it be not, the *Error*, you'll eaſily agree with me, is not of an *indifferent* Nature, as in other Speculations it may be; but an *Error* the moſt fatal in its Conſequence; For (if I gueſs right) your new *Fraternity* are ſo far from diſtinguiſhing themſelves in the *Manner* you repreſent them, that they are every Day abuſing that *Reaſon*, which God has given them; and that alſo to ſerve the worſt Purpoſes, in rejecting the *Goſpel-Revelation*, the Means of Grace, and the Hopes of Glory. But leſt I ſhould miſtake you, and charge further than you and your polite *Fraternity*

*nity* are guilty, pleaſe to explain your ſelf, in what this *new Opinion* of yours does conſiſt.

*B.* The *Opinion* I am now of, has been lately very fully ſtated by our *Society*, in a Book, call'd, *Chriſtianity as old as the Creation*, &c. I don't find, but the Book's well receiv'd; and Encouragement enough given for another Volume to follow (as promis'd) in due Time. Some of us had lately the Curioſity to *herd* our ſelves (as we call it) amongſt the *Country Clergy* at a certain *Biſhop's Viſitation*, where the Book was indeed plentifully rail'd at, and a general Indignation ſhewn at its being publiſh'd in ſuch a *pompous* Manner; they complain'd very much of the *Decline* of *Orthodoxy*, and inveigh'd pretty heartily againſt ſome of their *own Order*, as if they were much of the ſame *Opinion* with our ſelves; which (I muſt confeſs) gave a ſecret Pleaſure; and it was much fear'd, they ſaid, that in a little Time theſe *Opinions* might be defended from the *Pulpit*. Thanks to our Superiors (thought I) for ſuch a generous Indulgence as is now ſhewn to *Free-Thinkers*. Our late Brother *Toland* did ſome Years ago congratulate *only* the *City* of *London*, * (but the Happineſs is now almoſt *univerſal*) *That there was ſcarce a Way of honouring the* DEITY *known any where, but was either already allow'd, or might be ſafely exercis'd among* THEM; and 'tis from this Freedom, that *Truth* makes its Way in the World.



* See his Dedication prefix'd to Mr. *Harrington's* Works.

*A.* You are ſo very full of theſe miſtaken Notions of *Liberty*, that you forget the Queſtion I put to you. I deſire once more, you will either in your own Words, or in thoſe of your *Fraternity*, as deliver'd in that pompous Book you juſt mention'd, let me know in what this *new Opinion* of yours does conſiſt. You rightly obſerve, there is *Liberty* enough to ſpeak, write, and publiſh what you pleaſe; and for my own Part, I deſire no Quarter at your Hands: Defend your *new Opinion* as well as you can: But firſt let me know rightly what it is.

*B.* To ſpeak then without any Reſerve; I cannot admit of any ſuch Thing as you call *Revelation*, otherwiſe than as 'tis conſiſtent with *Natural Religion*: Where *they* are ſo conſiſtent, I readily embrace any Part of it; but if you talk of *Revelation* differing from *Natural Religion*, ſuch *Revelation* I reject; for to make ſuch a *Difference*, ſuppoſes, that the ſame infinite Being has given *two* independent *Rules* for the Government of human Actions. This muſt be the Caſe, when *Revelation* is thus magnified, and *poſitive* Duties enjoin'd, which Reaſon knows nothing of: So that my Opinion is, that if we uſe *thoſe Faculties*, which God has given us to judge with, *after the beſt Manner we can, the End is anſwer'd for which God gave them, and our Conduct fully juſtify'd.*

*A.* I have carefully read your pompous Book in *Quarto*; and, I confeſs, 'tis admirably well calculated for the *Propagation of Infidelity* amongſt

us;

us: There's a great deal of Addreſs, Dexterity, and *Politeneſs*, (as you ſay of your new Fraternity,) in adapting the Doctrines contain'd in it, to the Luſts and Paſſions of Men, to a deprav'd *Underſtanding*, and a corrupted *Will*; and if you are reſolved to inliſt yourſelf under ſuch *Leaders*, I think you are much in the Right of it, to quit your old *Society*, and not concern yourſelf any farther about the *Propagation of Chriſtianity*. I obſerve you ſpeak in the very Words that are uſed by your Fraternity; and you ſeem to be pretty well verſed in this *new* Book, that has given ſuch a Turn to your Thoughts about *Religion*. But, pray, explain yourſelf what you mean by that Part of *Revelation*, that may be admitted by you?

*B.* I think it needs little farther explaining: My Meaning is, that *natural* and *true-reveal'd* Religion do only differ in the *Manner* of their being convey'd to us: When any other *Difference* is made, and Reaſon aſſures us there is ſuch *Difference*, ſuch Part of Religion is not to be received as *Revelation*, but to be rejected as *Superſtition*: So that all the Diſtinction that our Fraternity think needs be made between *natural* and *reveal'd* Religion, is that of *internal* and *external* Revelation: In both of them we muſt uſe thoſe Faculties, as I ſaid before, which God has given us to judge with, *after the beſt Manner we can*; and conſequently *Reaſon* muſt be a ſufficient Guide in Matters of Religion, without having

having Recourſe to any other ſort of *Revelation*, ſuch as our *Reaſon* is a Stranger to.

*A.* Your Diſtinction of *internal* and *external* Revelation, puts me in Mind of Mr. *Lock*'s *Diſtinction* in this Matter; and ſince you Gentlemen pay ſo great a Deference to his Opinion, methinks, it ought to have its due Weight with you.—— "*Reaſon*, ſays he, is *natural Revela-* "*tion*, whereby the eternal Father of Light, and "Fountain of all Knowledge, communicates to "Mankind that Portion of Truth, which He has "laid within the *Reach* of their natural Facul- "ties: *Revelation* is natural Reaſon *enlarg'd* by "a new Set of Diſcoveries communicated by "God *immediately*, which Reaſon vouches the "Truth of by the Teſtimony and Proof it gives, "that they come from God." And, let me tell you, my old Friend, theſe few Lines of Mr. *Lock* deſtroy entirely all your great Volume in *Quarto*. I readily agree with you in one Thing you ſaid before, and which you juſt now repeated, *that we muſt uſe thoſe Faculties which God has given us to judge with, after the beſt Manner we can:* nay, to *examine* Things, and then act upon the Evidence that ariſes from ſuch Examination, is, I take it, our *Duty*; and if Mr. *T——l*, and the reſt of your Fraternity had *uſed thoſe Faculties which God has given 'em to judge with, after the beſt Manner they can*, (I uſe their own Words, as you have done,) they could never have perſwaded themſelves to write as they do, when the moſt important Concerns of Religion

were

were the Subject, in ſuch a vain, looſe, and trifling Manner; knowingly and wilfully abuſing and perverting the *primitive* Writers, as well as the moſt eminent *Divines* of our own Nation, in a very ſcandalous Manner. I will venture therefore to affirm, that if we uſe our Faculties *after the beſt Manner we can*, they will neceſſarily lead us to acknowledge the Truth of the *Goſpel Revelation*: So that your Book, in the main, is proving what *none deny*, if by *Reaſoning* you mean, that Men muſt one Way or other *examine* Things; for without ſuch Uſe of our Faculties, we never can truely come at the Knowledge of the *Goſpel-Revelation*, nor without *examining* can we judge of the Conſequences that naturally follow upon ſuch *Revelation* made to us. But will you therefore ſay, that our Reaſon or Faculties direct us to *judge*, or draw ſuch a Conſequence as you do, that there are no *Truths* in *Nature* and *Religion* to be admitted by us, but ſuch as our *deprav'd* Underſtandings can comprehend? Does our *Reaſon* tell us, that infinite Wiſdom and Power ought thus to be limited in his Dealings with his Creatures? So far from it, that if we look out into the *natural* World, we every Day ſee our *Aſſent* is requir'd to many Things in *Fact true*, which yet our Faculties will never enable us to give any tolerable Account of. * *I gratefully receive* (ſays Mr. *Lock*) *and rejoice in the Light of Revelation, which ſets me at Reſt in many Things, the Manner whereof my poor Reaſon can by no Means make*

* Vol. I. Page 573, 334.

*make out to me.* Here's Humility! an excellent Virtue, that your preſent Fraternity would do well to copy after; you ſee it was the neceſſary Reſult of *Free-thinking* in him, and will always be ſo, when 'tis *rightly* ſtated. *We muſt conſult our Reaſon,* ſays he, *and by it examine, whether it be a Revelation from God, or no. And if Reaſon finds it to be revealed from God, Reaſon then declares for it, as much as for any other Truth, and makes it one of her Dictates.* If you can't *join* then with Mr. *Lock,* produce your Arguments; and let the Chriſtian *Religion* ſtand or fall by its own Merits: But then let your Arguments be produc'd with an *honeſt* Mind, free from that notorious *Inſincerity,* that runs through moſt of the *Quotations* in your *new* Book; and forbear withal bantering, or being ridiculous in an Affair of the laſt Conſequence. In Truth, I much fear *Inſincerity* and *Jeſting* will not be ſo eaſily parted with, by your *Free-thinkers*; for ſuch Methods are the main Strength of your Cauſe, and your Leaders know very well, it ſerves to make the deepeſt Impreſſion on the *Unthinking* and *Ludicrous,* that is, the greateſt Part of Mankind.

*B.* I own, I did ſuſpect *Inſincerity* in ſome *Quotations,* when I firſt read the Book; and I ever diſlik'd *Jeſting,* or being *knowingly* impertinent in the Buſineſs of *Religion.* 'Tis true what Mr. *Lock* ſays, (and I ſhall by no Means oppoſe it,) *when Reaſon once finds it to be a Revelation from God,* 'tis our Buſineſs to ſubmit. But then,

Sir,

Sir, *how* ſhall our *Reaſon find it out* to be ſo; this with me is the great Difficulty. If you can produce that *Chain of Evidences*, as ſome talk of, which ſhall be ſo plain and forcible, as that they ſhall not fail to convince every *unprejudic'd Mind*, (as, I do aſſure you, *mine* is at preſent,) that the *Goſpel Revelation* (all that we now have under that Name) was *from God*, I will not only acquieſce, but farther acknowledge to you, that the Inference, which an eminent *Prelate** has lately made, is very juſt and cogent, *viz.* "That when "by the Help of our Reaſon, Revelation be- "comes ſo eſtabliſhed; no Suggeſtion, either a- "gainſt the *Need* of ſuch a Revelation, or againſt "our *Obligation* to receive it, ought to make any "Impreſſion upon us: For indeed to ſuppoſe, "that God makes a Revelation that is *needleſs*, "is a direct Impeachment of his *Wiſdom*; and "to affirm, that we are not bound to attend to "and receive it, when made, is no leſs an Im- "peachment of his *Authority*." But ſtill, as I ſaid before, the *Difficulty* with me is this, *how* we can, by the Help of our Reaſon, or a right Uſe of thoſe Faculties which God has given us to judge with, attain to a *certain Knowledge* of the *Truth* of thoſe *Facts*, which you call Proofs of the *Goſpel Revelation*? Or, to ſay all in a few Words, where are thoſe *credible Witneſſes*, that our Reaſon will tell us, we may and ought to rely on for the *Truth* of theſe Things?



* Biſhop of *London's* Second *Paſtoral Letter*.

*A.* Should it be ſuppoſed, that we had not *credible Witneſſes* to rely on; yet taking it for granted, that there were ſuch Perſons as the *Apoſtles*, (a *Fact* as clear, as that there were ſuch Perſons as *Auguſtus* and *Tiberius Cæſar*,) I appeal to your own Reaſon, or to *thoſe Faculties which God has given you to judge with, after the beſt Manner you can*, whether ſuch Perſons as the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and in their Circumſtances, could poſſibly be guilty of *Forgery* or *Impoſture*? Whether whole Societies of diſintereſted, perſecuted Chriſtians, could be deceived or miſtaken in the *Authors* of thoſe *Hiſtories*, and thoſe *Epiſtles* they had ſo lately receiv'd, and on which they ſet ſuch an ineſtimable Value? Whether thoſe Books, ſo highly eſteemed, ſo univerſally handled, ſo publickly read, ſo often tranſcrib'd, quoted, and expounded, ſo *jealouſly guarded* by contending Parties, could ever be *materially* altered, or poſſibly be corrupted, as Mr. *Whiſton* has groundleſly aſſerted 'em to be in the Days of *Barchocab*, (about the End of the firſt, or Beginning of the ſecond Century,) the better to ſerve his Purpoſe, relating to the Apoſtolical Conſtitutions? Notwithſtanding the Efforts of ſuch Men, this is the truly *Primitive* Religion that is now eſtabliſhed amongſt ourſelves; and it highly behoves our Governors to conſider, whether ſuch a Religion, as recommends *Juſtice* and *Unity*, *Peace* and *Civil Obedience*, *Temperance*, *Induſtry* and *Fidelity*, ſhould, in Point of Honour and Intereſt, be prophan'd, vilify'd, and ſet at

Nought,

Nought, either by ſuch Hereticks, or ſuch a Set of *Free-thinkers*, as you love to call yourſelves; and yet, after all your boaſted Reaſoning, you don't offer to introduce any better Religion inſtead of the *Chriſtian*: The Truth is, *Free-thinking*, you fancy, will juſtify *Free-living*. There's a Fear and Dread of religious Truths; or, as Dr. *Clarke** has very well obſerved: "In "the *Manners* of moſt of you it is too plain "and apparent, that abſolute *Libertiniſm* is the "Thing you really aim at; and however their "*Creed* (ſays he) may pretend to be the Creed "of *Deiſts*, yet almoſt always their *Practice* is "the Practice of very *Atheiſts*.

*B.* You ſeem to grow warm; but Warmth, you know, is of no Service to any Cauſe. I think you ſaid juſt now, that it could not well admit of a *Doubt*, (for the Reaſons you have aſſign'd,) whether the *Epiſtles* and *Goſpels* could be *materially* alter'd or corrupted. Now, this *Doubt*, I own, I have, and it ſticks with me, notwithſtanding the Reaſons you have given; and therefore this is the main Point that I ſhall inſiſt on. I don't ſuſpect the *Apoſtles* guilty of *Forgery* or *Impoſture*, nor do I deny that their *Works* were highly valuable for many Years: But ſince there have been many *pious Frauds* amongſt the *contending* Parties, (you mention'd) in After-Ages, how can we be certain, that theſe *Epiſtles* and *Goſpels* have not been *materially* alter'd or corrupted? Or, as I ſaid before, where



*In his *Boyle's Lectures.*

are thoſe *credible Witneſſes* to be met with, which our *Reaſon* will tell us, we may ſafely rely on for the Certainty of the *Goſpel Revelation*, as 'tis now received in this Kingdom?

*A.* I hope, Sir, you will readily allow, that there were no *pious Frauds* among *Heathens* or *Jews*, in regard to the *Chriſtian* Religion and its *Doctrines*: What think you then of thoſe Perſons, that were the avow'd *Enemies* of the *Chriſtian* Religion in general: Such as *Cornelius Tacitus*, *Celſus*, *Prophyrie*, and a long Liſt beſides of ſuch learned and obſerving *Heathens*, whoſe Works are *genuine*, and their Evidence not liable to any Objection? What ſay you, if I *appeal* to theſe Men, and ſome *Jews* alſo, as *credible Witneſſes* of the Truth of theſe Things? I deſire therefore, that their *Teſtimonies* may be heard touching any ſuch *Doctrines*, or Points of *Faith*, or any *Facts*, as they now ſtand recorded in the *Epiſtles* and *Goſpels*, ſuch as you ſhall pleaſe to queſtion the Truth of: And, as I don't doubt but their *Teſtimony* will corroborate the *Authority* of the ancient *Fathers* of the Church in theſe Matters, (where you ſeem to object your *pious Frauds,*) ſo I am perſwaded, they will prove to be *full Evidence*, that the *Epiſtles* and *Goſpels* have not been *materially* altered or corrupted.

*B.* You ſurprize me very much; and if you can make out your Point, the Surprize will be highly agreeable: There certainly can be no Objection to the *Credibility* of ſuch *Witneſſes*; but

but on the contrary, (as 'tis obſerved and allow'd of in our Courts of Juſtice,) the *Evidence* is always much ſtronger, and more regarded, that comes from the Mouth of an *Adverſary*.

*A.* It was for this Reaſon, that the *Fathers* in the early Times of Chriſtianity, took an eſpecial Care to corroborate the Doctrines of their Religion, by the *Evidence* which they alledged out of the moſt eminent *Heathen* Writers. By this Means they often furniſhed themſelves with Weapons out of their Enemies own Quarters, to defend the Truth of the Chriſtian *Religion*. *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, and *Origin* his Scholar, were remarkably happy and ſucceſsful that Way; and *Lactantius*,* the Chriſtian *Cicero*, was ſo ſenſible of the Advantage that *Chriſtianity* might receive by ſuch a Method, that he forms a Plan whereupon to proceed, and adviſes the making *Extracts* out of *Heathen* Writers, touching ſuch Things as they had ſaid conformable to the Holy Scriptures, and then reducing them into one Body or Syſtem for the common Good of Chriſtianity.

*B.* I perceive then, the Method you propoſe is not altogether *new:* However 'tis what I approve of, and therefore deſire you would proceed. I am ſorry, I am not ſo well vers'd in the *Claſſick* Authors, as I ought to be at this Time; but I think, I know enough, not to be eaſily *impos'd on* in theſe Matters; and beſides, I have

* Inſtit. Lib. vii. Cap. 7.

I have that good Opinion of you, that there will be no Attempt to reconvert me *that Way*.

*A.* Let my old Friend reſt ſatify'd, that I will deal with him in this Affair with the greateſt *Sincerity*, though your Fraternity in *this* are ſo notoriouſly deficient, and in an Affair of the utmoſt Concern to us all. I will alledge nothing from any *Heathen* Writer to the Purpoſe in hand, but ſuch as is allow'd to be *genuine* by *all*, or if not *by all*, I ſhall endeavour to prove it ſo, before I apply it; I will take the beſt Care, I can, not to miſtake the Senſe of my Author; and if I do at any Time, I know your Abilities to be ſuch, that you can ſoon ſet me right. But this is a ſort of Work, that can't be done, either to your Satisfaction, or mine, without having the *Authors* themſelves before us, that I am to *appeal* to. Pleaſe then, if you have reſted your ſelf ſufficiently, after the pleaſant Walk we have had in the Park, to ſtep into my Study, and there we'll ſummon thoſe *Authors* to make their Appearance, and give *Evidence*, as often as we have Occaſion for 'em.

*B.* I muſt confeſs, this Room gives me a ſingular Pleaſure; and if you can make good your Point by the Help of theſe old *Gentile* Philoſophers and Hiſtorians, (which I ſee are ready at hand whenever we call 'em,) I ſhall think they deſerve a more honourable *Claſs*, than ſome of thoſe old *primitive Gentlemen* I ſee at a Diſtance.

*A.* I

*A.* I eaſily gueſs who you mean, the *Fathers* of the Chriſtian Church; your Prejudices, I find, are very ſtrong againſt 'em; but I do aſſure you, without Foundation, unleſs human Frailties are to be charg'd as Crimes; otherwiſe I could eaſily vindicate 'em from thoſe vile Reproaches and unjuſt Reflections, that are caſt on 'em in your new *Free-thinking* Book: But I can only promiſe you now, that this ſhall be done ſome other Time, if you deſire it; tho' it will appear in our preſent Debates, that *Heathen* Writers and the *Fathers* ſupport one another in this Matter. Matters of *Fact*, we are now chiefly to enquire into, and the *Method* propos'd and approv'd of by you, is, that the *Heathen* and *Jewiſh* Writers *only* ſhou'd be appeal'd to, to ſee how far they confirm the ſeveral Branches of the *Chriſtian* Religion, in that Manner as 'tis now profeſs'd by us in our *Bible*. "And if *they* ſhall fully and clearly *bear witneſs*, not only in general to ſome one Truth "contain'd in the Holy Scriptures, but alſo to "the *Divinity* of Jeſus Chriſt; to the *Reality* "of his Miracles; to the literal Accompliſhment of the Divine *Prophecies* relating to "Him; to the principal Doctrines contain'd in "the New Teſtament; to the *Holineſs* and *Purity* of Chriſtianity, and the remarkable *Sanctity* of its Profeſſors; I hope you will then "agree with me, that the Religion, as we now "profeſs it, is truly *primitive*, and did really "*come down from God.*

*B.* I join iſſue with you entirely in the Manner as is already propos'd and agreed to: Begin, as ſoon as you pleaſe.

*A.* Before I begin, pleaſe to caſt an Eye on a Manuſcript lying on the Table; 'tis a Collection of the *Authorities* that I am to make uſe of from the *Heathen* and *Jewiſh* Writers, in order to prove what I have propos'd. This Collection has been made for ſome Years, purſuant to the Advice given by *Lactantius*, as I mention'd to you, juſt before we finiſh'd our Walk: The *Authorities* are already made *Engliſh*, with proper References; which will much ſhorten the Time. All I now deſire, is, that you would let me know, in what Manner I ſhall proceed, or what Topick you would have firſt diſcuſs'd; and when I produce my *Teſtimonies*, be as particular as you will, in putting Queſtions about the ſeveral *Authors*, whether as to their Time of living; or the Occaſion and Nature of ſuch *Teſtimonies*; or what Character ſuch *Authors* bore in the World: Canvas theſe Matters as rigidly as you pleaſe; for I am ſatisfied, the more you do it, the brighter and ſtronger the *Teſtimony* will appear.

*B.* You may begin in what Manner you think fit, and take your own Way in the proving what you have undertaken: And as to putting of Queſtions, you need not have made that a Requeſt; for I may happen to put 'em faſter than you can anſwer em; at leaſt, I do aſſure you, if that will make your *Teſtimonies* brighter and

ſtronger

ſtronger, my Aſſiſtance ſhan't be wanting. I obſerve in the firſt Page of your *Collection*, there's a *Teſtimony* taken from *Phlegon*. If you pleaſe, let him be the *firſt* that gives his *Evidence*, and then we'll examine what *it* amounts to; I think he was an ancient Writer, and therefore may very well have the Preference given him.

*A. Phlegon* liv'd about the Beginning of the ſecond Century, ſirnam'd *Trallianus*, from the Place of his Nativity in *Aſia*; but he liv'd the beſt Part of his Time under the Emperor *Adrian*, who was fond of having him and other learned Men about his Perſon. *Phlegon* might not improperly be call'd one of your *Belles-Lettres* Men; thoſe Pieces of his that are yet extant, make us juſtly regret the Loſs of his other Works; we ſee however from his Remains, that he was one, who had a fine Taſte; had a great Fund of good Learning, and yet a Politeneſs withal, that made him and his Learning agreeable to the greateſt Court then known in the World.

*B.* What *Pieces* are there now remaining of *Phlegon*'s, and from which of them do you intend to fetch your *Teſtimony*?

*A.* There are *three* very conſiderable ones yet extant, which *Meurſius* has taken care to put together, and to illuſtrate with his own *Notes*. The moſt remarkable of thoſe *three* Pieces, is his famous *Hiſtory* of the *Olympiads* (from whence I intend preſently to produce my *Teſtimonies*) dedicated to *Alcibiades* Captain of the Emperor *Adrian*'s Guards. *Scaliger* in his Animad-

verſions on *Euſebius*'s *Chron.* p. 185. ſuggeſts, that the Emperor *Adrian* himſelf compos'd this Work, and that *Phlegon*, by his Permiſſion, publiſh'd it: Be that as it will, our Cauſe is not affected in the leaſt. This Work was pen'd in the Way of *Annals*, or a ſort of *Chronicle* that Way manag'd, divided into *ſixteen* Books, giving an Account of the moſt remarkable Things that had happen'd in the whole World, for the Space of more than 900 Years; I mean, from the Eſtabliſhment (or rather Renewal) of the *Olympiads* under *Iphitus*, to the 138th Year of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which was in the 229th *Olympiad*. To apprehend the Excellency of this Work, you need only caſt your Eyes on the 177th *Olympiad*, which *Photius* has preſerv'd for us in his *Bibliotheque*; and you will eaſily form a Judgment, from the extraordinary Occurrences *there* taken notice of by *Phlegon*, of what a mighty Advantage ſuch an entire *Chronicle* would have been, for clearing up *many Paſſages* in *profane* and *Eccleſiaſtical* Hiſtory too: However, according to the good Pleaſure of the Almighty, there are ſtill extant in *this* Hiſtory of the *Olympiads*, two or three noble, irrefragable *Teſtimonies*, ſuch as are not to be ſhaken by all the Wit and Malice of your *Fraternity*; which *Phlegon* (neither wittingly nor willingly) gives to the *Divinity* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and to the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion in general. The *Teſtimonies* are theſe ——

*B.* Sir, as impatient as I am to hear what those *Testimonies* are, I am willing to have one Minute's Patience more, whilst you just name to me the *Titles* of those *two* other Pieces of *Phlegon:* Pray oblige me so far, and in as few Words as you please.

*A.* One of them, which is the *second* Piece, is call'd, *A History of such Things as have been observ'd to be Extraordinary, Marvellous, or out of the common Course of Nature.* This History consisted of thirty-five Chapters; but the Beginning, and the better Part of it, is wanting. His *third* Piece is a Treatise on the *Longevity* of Men, giving a particular List of such Persons, as have exceeded one hundred Years. I will only add, that the Fragments of these *three* curious Pieces are happily to be met with in the *eighth* and *ninth* Volumes of *Gronovius*'s *Greek* Antiquities; by which Means that learned Man has taken care, that Posterity shall not be depriv'd of those valuable Remains. I will now proceed, and observe to you the *Testimonies* that *Phlegon* gives in this History of the *Olympiads*; and for this Purpose we must also have Recourse to *Lactantius* in his *Institutions*, Lib. IV. c. 21. and to *Origen* in his second Book against *Celsus*: Now, *Phlegon* first of all avers in the most solemn Manner, "That *Jesus Christ* had been a true "*Prophet*; that he knew the *Times* that were "to come; that such were foretold by Him; "and that there has been an exact Accomplish-"ment of all his Predictions.

*B.* Pray, what might induce *Phlegon* to ſpeak ſo poſitively in this Matter; or what *Authority* had he to ſupport ſuch a *Declaration?*

*A.* He had much the ſame *Authority*, as you would have, if you ſearch'd the *Records* in the Tower of *London*, and got any Matter of *Fact* regularly atteſted from thence. You can't but know, and every reaſonable Body muſt think, that they had at *Rome* (the great Metropolis) their *Archives*, publick *Regiſters*, or *Records*; you muſt allow, that *Phlegon* had free Acceſs to theſe *Records*, when and *as* often as he pleas'd; and you find nothing more common amongſt the primitive *Apologiſts*, when pleading before *Emperors* or others in Defence of the *Chriſtian* Religion, than *appealing* to theſe publick *Acts*, or *Records*.

*B.* I ſuppoſe then, this Declaration of *Phlegon's*, touching the *Divinity* of Jeſus Chriſt, was what he grounded upon ſome Matters of *Fact*, recorded in that *publick* Manner you ſpeak of. But are there any ſuch Matters of *Fact* in *Phlegon's* Hiſtory of the *Olympiads*, as will ſufficiently prove ſuch Declaration of *Phlegon's* concerning Chriſt's *Divinity* to be well grounded?

*A.* There is one *Fact* in *Phlegon's* Hiſtory, which does it effectually; and that is, his recording the *wonderful Darkneſs that overſpread the Face of the Earth at the Time of our Saviour's Crucifixion*; this he had unqueſtionably confirm'd to him from thoſe publick *Records* juſt mention'd; the *Poſt* he was in at Court, as

I have hinted already, muſt naturally lead him to ſearch theſe *Records*, and the Nature of the *Work* which he was compoſing [his Hiſtory] did indeed abſolutely require it; in this Search then among the *publick Acts* occur'd to *Phlegon* among others, the extraordinary *Event* I have now taken notice of, and which he copy'd in the plain, ſimple Manner he found it recorded. Theſe *Records* were indeed well enough known to Friends as well as Enemies of *Chriſtianity*, or elſe there had not been ſuch a frequent *Appealing* to 'em, as we find there was; and as to the particular *Fact* now before us, that renown'd Martyr *Lucian*, *Tertullian*, and others, have directly *appeal'd* to theſe *Roman Annals*, for the Truth of *it*, and as often confounded their Adverſaries with that ſort of Argument. The Martyr *Lucian*, ſo famous for his Learning, Piety, and Conſtancy, when his Judge had interrogated him publickly about his Religion, and he had given an Account of his Faith, he afterwards rais'd his Voice to a higher Pitch, and ſpake as follows, " If you will not have any Regard to " the *Teſtimony* I have given you for the *Divi-* " *nity* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, you have nothing left " but to conſult your own *Annals*; there you " will find, that during *Pilate*'s Government, " and at the Time, when the Saviour of the " World was crucify'd, the Sun diſappear'd, " and the Univerſe was buried, as it were, in " Darkneſs.

*B.* I don't know how well at preſent to object to this *Teſtimony* of *Lucian*'s, becauſe you ſay he ſuffered *Death* for the Cauſe which he eſpouſed. That's a *Time*, I muſt own, when *pious Frauds* can hardly be ſuppoſed to be practic'd; and putting a Cheat upon themſelves or others, can turn to little Account: But before I fully aſſent to this *Teſtimony*, let me hear a little more of this *Lucian*, and who it is that relates this of him.

*A.* I eaſily imagin'd, you was not ſo well acquainted with this *Lucian*, as with another of the ſame Name, whoſe *Dialogues* (I know) now and then ſerve to exhilerate and keep up the Spirits of your Fraternity. Your *Lucian* had certainly a great deal of Wit; but he did not turn it to ſuch good Purpoſe, as the *Martyr* did. And yet *unawares*, your *Lucian* too has given a *Teſtimony* to one of the greateſt Myſteries of our *Religion*, as I ſhall have Occaſion to ſhew and defend before we have done; ſo that his Wit proved a Snare to others, and has weakened the very Cauſe of *Infidelity* he was maintaining. As to our Martyr, if you dare believe the Character that St. *Chryſoſtome** and *Athanaſius*† give of him, He was a Man of rare Accompliſhments, and uncommon Learning; a profound Philoſopher, and a compleat Orator; had a thorough Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and was ſo accurately skill'd in the *Greek* and *Hebrew* Learning, that he became a Corrector of the *Septuagint*; was the

* Tom. i. Hom. 46. † In Synopſi

the Author of that famous vulgar Translation of the Bible, that generally obtained in the *East*, both in the *fourth* and *fifth* Centuries, and was commonly call'd *Lucian*'s Version. 'Tis natural to believe, such an able Defender of his Religion, would not be wanting in laying hold of the *Weapons*, that his Enemies had furnished him with for that Purpose; I mean their own *Records*: And that he did thus defend himself, as I have said already, you may learn from *Ruffinus*,* a Cotemporary of St. *Jerome*, and *once* a great Friend of his, at the latter End of the *fourth* Century: And, for your farther Satisfaction in this Matter, you shall have the *Testimony* of *Tertullian* likewise, when you please, who *appeal'd* to the *Roman Archives*, for the Truth of the same Matter of *Fact*, concerning the *miraculous Darkness* at the Time of our Saviour's Crucifixion.

*B.* I might except to *Tertullian*'s *Evidence*, because, contrary to the Method proposed, he is neither *Jew* nor *Heathen*; but since 'tis so, that his *Evidence* relates only to a Matter of *Fact*, with which he press'd his Enemies; and they were certainly concern'd to answer him, if they could; and since your are proving, that *Heathens* likewise have taken Notice of the same Matter of *Fact*, and from the same *Records*, I think *Tertullian* ought to be heard in a proper Place: But I desire, before he makes his *Appearance*, that *Phlegon* may be called once more; for

* Hist. Eccl. Lib. ix. Cap. 6.

for it was only ſaid in *general* a while ago, if I remember right, that in *Phlegon*'s Hiſtory of the *Olympiads*, Mention was made of this *Fact*, the *wonderful Darkneſs*, attending our *Saviour's Crucifixion*; I deſire now to know, how that Paſſage ſtands in *Phlegon*, and in what Language he wrote it?

*A.* I will give you the *Paſſage* at Length, which was written in *Greek*, and tranſlated into *Latin* both by *Euſebius** and St. *Jerome*. The *Original* you may read at your Leiſure;† I will now only give it you in *Engliſh*: The Hiſtorian, when he comes to the *two hundred and ſecond Olympiad*, ſays expreſsly, *That in the fourth* (or laſt) *Year of that Olympiad*, (which anſwers to the *Eighteenth* of *Tiberius*, and to the Year of our Lord's Crucifixion,) *there was a greater Eclipſe of the Sun than was ever known before: There was Night at the Sixth Hour* * *of the Day; in as much as the Stars were ſeen in the Heavens: There was alſo a mighty Earthquake, which cauſed a great Overthrow at* Nice *in* Bithynia. The *Fathers* in their *Apologeticks* laid a great Streſs (as well they might) upon theſe Words of *Phlegon*; and they have demonſtrated in thoſe and other of their Works, that this *Eclipſe* of *Phlegon*'s, (or to ſpeak more properly,) that ſudden Defection, or Ceſſation of Light at Noon-Day, neither was, nor *could be*, other than a *Supernatural*

* *Hieron.* & *Euſeb.* in Chronico.

† *Phleg. Olymp.* 202.

* 'Tis well known, that at *Rome* the *Sixth* Hour was our Twelve o'Clock.

*tural* Eclipſe, hap'ning at the Death of our Saviour, ſince by the unanimous Agreement of all *Aſtronomers*, whether *Greek* or *Roman*, or any where elſe through the Univerſe, there neither was, nor could be, a *natural* Eclipſe, during that *Eighteenth* Year of *Tiberius*'s Reign; and conſequently *that Darkneſs*, we are now talking of, muſt neceſſarily have been *miraculous* or *ſupernatural*, it happening at the Time of *full Moon*, and was ſuch an *Eclipſe*, as put the whole Syſtem of the Univerſe quite out of Order. Give me Leave then to tell you, Sir, this is ſuch a Sort of Proof for the Truth of our Religion, that whenever it has been urg'd, it has carried ſo much Strength and Weight along with it; has appeared ſo very powerful and cogent, that neither *Porphyry*, nor *Julian*, nor any of our other Enemies have been able to make any *tolerable* Reply to it.

*B.* You ſeem to be very *elate* upon this firſt *Evidence* given by *Phlegon*; and if the Caſe ſtands really and truly, as you have put it, I think He well deſerves the Precedency that's given him. But there are ſome *Scruples*, I muſt tell you, that ſtill reſt with me touching this *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon*: If he has finiſhed his *Evidence*, my *Scruples* or *Exceptions* are ready to be offered to you.

*A.* It was you, if you remember, that call'd for *Phlegon* to make his *ſecond* Appearance; and now he is here, I don't care *yet* to part with him: I find you are framing *Objections*, (though

I believe nothing more than what I have often heard from your *Libertines*,) and therefore I'll make the most of *Phlegon* that I can: Now, this *Heathen* Writer in his History of the *Olympiads*, gives this farther *Testimony* in Behalf of the *Christian* Religion, and which equally deserves our Notice with the former, *viz.* "That "the Predictions, which St. *Peter* had made "to the *Jews*, touching their approaching "Ruin, and that of their City *Jerusalem* in "particular, had been all exactly fulfill'd in "what had happen'd; and that such an *Event* "ought to be look'd on as the Effect of some "superior Power, and as the Will and Pleasure "of Heaven, that Things should so fall out." And here 'tis proper to observe to you from *Origen*,* that he did not fail taking Advantage from this *Authority* of *Phlegon*, for refuting the Calumnies of *Celsus*, and for proving the *Divinity* of Jesus Christ, against the Profaneness of that *Epicurean*: And here also it may be farther remark'd, with your Leave, that at the Time when *Origen* writ, this Chronicle of *Phlegon* was all *entire*, and in every body's Hands. There's another *Fact* that was recorded by *Phlegon*, in his *Olympiads*, that serves very well our present Purpose, which *Eusebius* reports after *Phlegon*. I will just mention it, (for I am impatient to hear your *Scruples*,) and I may have an Occasion to speak of it more fully another Time: 'Tis *Phlegon* then, who has first observed, *That* Pilate,

* Contra *Celsum*. Lib. ii.

late, *ſinking under the Diſgraces he met with, became his own Executioner; killing himſelf through Deſpair, after he had languiſhed for ſome Time in his* Exile, *being baniſhed by the Emperor* Caligula. And now, I am ready to hear what thoſe *Scruples are*, touching *Phlegon's Teſtimony*, as I have given it, concerning the *miraculous Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Death.

*B.* One *Scruple* that I have is this: There's an Author, who has been of good Credit many Years ago for *ſome* Works that he publiſh'd, and He is much valued by our *Society*, who ſays expreſsly, that this extraordinary *Eclipſe* that *Phlegon* ſpeaks of, is plac'd by *him*, not in the *fourth* Year of the *two hundred and ſecond Olympiad*, as you have now given it from the Collection of *Teſtimonies* lying before us, but in the *fourth* Year of the *two hundred and tenth Olympiad*; and ſays farther, that in this Account of *Phlegon's*, the Sun is ſaid to have been then in *Piſces*, one of the *twelve* celeſtial Signs. I don't remember to have ſeen this particular Tract of the Author's, otherwiſe than in *Manuſcript*; but in that Manner 'tis common and very current amongſt us: And, if what he ſays be true, your Argument is of no Force, and the *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon* only ſerves to prove, that there was an extraordinary Eclipſe about *thirty two* Years *after* the Time that you have fixed for the Death of Chriſt.

*A. Euſebius*, who makes ſo much Uſe of *Phlegon's* Olympiads, when he comes to the fourth Year of the *two hundred and tenth Olympiad*, has

theſe remarkable Occurrences, *viz.* *This Year* Lucan *the Poet, being catch'd in a Plot, held out his Arm for the Surgeon to cut his Veins;* Nero *ſet* Rome *on Fire, that he might have the better Idea of* Troy *when in Flames; and three Cities in* Aſia *were overturned by an Earthquake,* Laodicea, Hierapolis, *and* Coloſſe. But not a Word of ſuch an extraordinary Eclipſe as we are talking of: and I'll venture to ſay, before I name your Author, (which I can eaſily do, and am no Stranger to the *Manuſcript*,) that he is the *only* Perſon that ever charged *Phlegon* in this Manner; and I have often wonder'd what *Frenzy* could carry a Man ſo far, as to attempt to change the Text of *Phlegon*, in order to rob *Chriſtians* of ſo ſingular a *Teſtimony* given by a *Heathen* from the publick *Records* for the *Divinity* of Jeſus Chriſt. I am ſenſible, however, I am now lying under the Suſpicion of *Inſincerity*, as to this Quotation from *Phlegon*; and therefore have no better Way to clear myſelf of ſuch Imputation than by ſummoning *Meurſius** in his Notes upon *Phlegon*: Here he is; read, and then give me your Opinion.

*B.* I

* J. Meurſius in notis ad Phlegontis Tralliani Fragmentum de Olympiis. *Vid. J. Gronovii Theſaur. Antiq. Græc. Vol.* ix. *pag.* 1292.

Euſebius in Chron. nominat xiii. librum Chronicorum Phlegontis; Γράφει δε ϗ λέγει ὁ τὰς Ὀλυμπιάδας γράφων Φλέγων, περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ τρισκαιδεκάτῳ, ῥήμασιν αὐτοῖς τάδε. Τῷ δε ἔτει τῆς ΣΒ. Ὀλυμπιάδ☉ ἐγένετο ἔκλειψις, τῷ τεταρτῷ ἔτει διακοσιοστῆς δευτέρας Ὀλυμπιάδ☉ ἐγένετο ἔκλειψις ἡλίου μεγίστη, τῶν ἐγνωρισμένων πρότερον. ϗ νύξ ὥρᾳ ἕκτῃ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο ὥστε ϗ ἀστέρας ἐν οὐρανῷ φανῆναι. σεισμός τε μέγας κατὰ Βιθυνίαν γενόμεν☉ τὰ πολλὰ Νικαίας καταρρέψαντο. Ubi habes, ecce, Fragmentum item Operis.

Ex

*B.* I don't find one Word here of *Piſces*, or of the *two hundred and tenth Olympiad*: If there be no more *Phlegons*, my Author has certainly play'd the Knave: The Paſſage is as you have repreſented it to be, as to *Time*; and I own your Tranſlation of the whole to be juſt, as you gave it me from your *Collection*: I fear my Author had ſome *ill Ends* to ſerve by this *changing* of *Phlegon*'s Text.

*A.* Your Author is *Bodin*, the ſame Man that writ ſix Books *de Republicâ*, and other Pieces that

Ex Euſebio autem tranſtulit *Paulus Diaconus*, *Hiſt. Miſc. Lib.* vii. "Scribens autem inter cæteros & Phlegon, qui Olympiadas ſuper ipſis "enumerat, in tertio decimo ſermone eiſdem verbis adſerit. Por-"ro quarto anno CCII Olympiadis, facta eſt defectio Solis maxi-"ma, & nox horâ ſextâ diei facta eſt: ità ut etiam ſtellæ in cœ-"lo apparerent. Terræmotus etiam magnus in Bithynia factus, "plurimam Nicææ partem urbis ſubvertit. Et *Maximus* in Scho-"liis ad Dionyſii Areop. Ep. vii. Μέμνηλαι μὲν ϗ Φλέγων, ὁ Ἑλλη-νικὸς χρονογράφος, ἐν τρισκαιδεκάτῳ χρονογραφιῶν ἐν τῇ ΣΒ. Ὀλυμ-πιάδι, τῆς ἐκλείψεως ταύτης. Ante omnes verò Origenes contra Celſum, Lib. ii. qui de numero tamen libri ambigit. Φλέγων μέν-τοι ἐν τρίσκαιδεκάτῳ, ἢ τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτῳ, οἶμαι, τῶν χρονικῶν, ϗ τὴν περὶ τινων μελλόντων πρόγνωσιν ἔδωκε τῷ Χριςῷ. Et mox: Περὶ δε τῆς ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐκλείψεως, ἣ Βασιλεύοντος ϗ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔοικεν ἐσαυρῶσθαι, ϗ περὶ τῶν μεγάλων τότε γενομένων σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς, ἀνέγραψε ϗ Φλέγων ἐν τῷ τρισκαιδεκάτῳ, οἶμαι, τῶν Χρο-νικῶν. Ego rectum numerum cenſeo xiv. Nam, ut calculum ſub-ducamus, juſtâ operis dividendi proportione, in ſingulis libris fue-rint Olympiades quindecim; ac poſtremus imperfectus quatuor tantùm in ſe habuerit, plures habiturus, ſi *Phlegonti* vita diutur-nior fuiſſet: Ergo Olympias CCII. pertractata, Lib. xiv. fuerit.

Euſeb. in Chron. Lib. poſter. ad Olymp. CCII. ità habet: Je-ſus Chriſtus ſecundùm Prophetias, quæ de eo fuerant prolocutæ, ad paſſionem venit anno Tiberii decimo octavo, quo tempore etiam in aliis Ethnicorum Commentariis, hæc ad verbum ſcripta repe-perimus: *Solis facta defectio: Bithynia terræmotu concuſſa: & in urbe Nicæâ ædes plurimæ corruerunt.* Quæ omnia his congruunt quæ in paſſione Salvatoris acciderant. Scribit verò ſuper his & *Phlego*, qui Olympiadarum egregius Supputator eſt, in xiii. libro ità dicens; *Quarto autem anno* CCII. *Olympiadis, magna & ex-cellens inter omnes, quæ ante eam acciderant, Defectio Solis facta,* &c.

that are deſervedly eſteemed for a great deal of good Learning that is in them: But the *Manuſcript*, out of which you and Thouſands ſuck their Poiſon, (written *Dialogue wiſe* and in *Latin*,) is intitled, *De abditis rerum ſublimium Arcanis.* 'Tis in theſe peſtilent *Dialogues* that he has ventur'd in ſuch a groſs malicious Manner to impoſe upon the World in relation to this *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon*; and as to your *Fears* of *Bodin*'s having ſome *ill Ends* to ſerve, it appears plain enough from thoſe *Dialogues*, in other Inſtances beſides this.

*B.* I own, *Bodin* was the Author I meant; but pray, what are thoſe other Inſtances, that ſhew his *ill* Deſigns?

*A.* I ſay no more at preſent, than that in thoſe *Dialogues*, he queſtions the *Virgin* Mary as *ſuch*, after our Saviour's Incarnation, or God manifeſted in the Fleſh; and treats the *two* firſt Chapters of St. *Luke*'s Goſpel as *Apocryphal*, becauſe the *Divinity* of *Jeſus Chriſt* there diſplays it ſelf in ſo full a Light; upon the whole, 'tis too plain, that *Bodin*, under the Mask of a *Chriſtian*, was either *Jew* or *Infidel* at the Bottom; and I hope in a little Time, God will give you Grace to leave ſuch Company, and to uſe thoſe Means that he has appointed to make you happy. I hope your *Scruple* however is now at an End; if not, *Reaſon* it ſelf will do it for you: And you know by the *Laws* of your *Society*, as has been already obſerv'd, you are bound to uſe thoſe *Faculties that God has*



*given*

*given you after the beſt Manner you can.* For conſider the *Fact* or *Facts* now before us; *Phlegon* tells us from the *Roman Records* that there was ſuch a *ſurpriſing Darkneſs*, and that it was attended with a *violent Earthquake*; and the *primitive* Writers in their *Apologies* for the *Truth* of the *Chriſtian* Religion, appeal to thoſe very *Records*, whether thoſe *two Facts* were not there fully atteſted in the like Manner as they were related by the *Evangeliſts*: But would it not have been very abſurd, impertinent, and doing no manner of Service to the Cauſe of Chriſtianity, if, in thoſe *Records* which they were appealing to, they had not known there was a perfect Agreement in *Point of Time*, as to ſuch *Darkneſs* and *Earthquake*, and our *Saviour's* Crucifixion? And how eaſy had it been for thoſe they *appeal'd* to, to have ſhewn 'em their *Error*, and which certainly they wou'd have done, if they cou'd? But the *publick Records* were too well known; the *Apologiſts* therefore triumph'd in this Particular, as well they might; nor was there ever a *Porphyry*, a *Lucian*, a *Celſus*, or a *Julian*, that offer'd to controvert the *Point of Time*, as to this *Eclipſe*. *Aſtronomers*, as I ſaid before, have all agreed that there could be no *Natural Eclipſe* during the eighteenth Year of *Tiberius's* Reign, which was the Year of our Saviour's Crucifixion; and yet the *Roman Records* ſay there was an *Eclipſe* that very Year; the *Apologiſts* very well knew the *Romans* had recorded ſuch wonderful *Eclipſe*, and therefore with great

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Confidence make their Appeal: *Phlegon* relates the ſame Thing from thoſe *Records*; his *fourth* Year of the two hundred and ſecond *Olympiad* is well known to correſpond with the eighteenth of *Tiberius*; and the Paſſage given by *Phlegon* being the *ſame*, and taken from the *ſame* Place, where the *Apologiſts* appeal'd to, it muſt be, that the *fourth* Year of the two hundred and ſecond *Olympiad* was the *Time* when this extraordinary Eclipſe happen'd. But, Sir, were it poſſible that *Phlegon's Teſtimony* cou'd be any ways ſhaken (as I am ſure it cannot) *non deficit alter*; he is not the *only Heathen* Writer, that can bear Witneſs to this wonderful *Darkneſs*, and being *wonderful*, ſerv'd to illuſtrate the Death of our Saviour: I have one in *petto*, whenever you pleaſe to call for him; and I can tell you farther, he is older than *Phlegon* too; for he liv'd even in the *firſt* Century: But my Buſineſs now is to hear your *Scruples*, if you have any *more* about *Phlegon's* Teſtimony, and then to give you the beſt Satisfaction I can.

*B.* You are very obliging: I have another *Scruple* or *Objection*, 'tis true, relating to *Phlegon's* Teſtimony; and I think a pretty ſtrong one too; anſwer it, if you can; and till you have done that, I would not have you be ſo poſitive, as you are, that *Phlegon* will certainly *ſtand his ground*. The *Objection* is this; I obſerve, *Phlegon* in his *Teſtimony* does not take any Notice, that it was *full Moon* when this Eclipſe happen'd, and therefore it might be a *natural* Eclipſe, and yet many ſurpriſing Circumſtances

ſtances attending it; but 'tis your Buſineſs, you know, to make it out to be *ſupernatural*, or elſe *Phlegon*'s *Teſtimony* will not ſerve your preſent Purpoſe; Aſtronomers have acquainted the World with many amazing *Eclipſes*; yet all in a *natural* Way. There was a prodigious *Eclipſe* uſhering in the Death of *Charles the Great*, as *Eginhardus* in his Life relates. There was another *Eclipſe* twenty-eight Years after that, as taken notice of by *Alſtedius* and others; ſo great, that the *Stars* were ſeen, as in the Night-time. And you know, 'tis not many Years ago, that we were Witneſſes our ſelves of ſuch an *Eclipſe* here in *England*; ſo very dreadful, that the Birds fell down to the Ground; but theſe *Eclipſes* all happen'd by a regular Motion of the heavenly Bodies; and *ſuch* I am to ſuppoſe *Phlegon*'s *Eclipſe* to be, till you prove it otherwiſe.

*A.* I grant, Sir, if this *Eclipſe* can't be prov'd to be *ſupernatural*, your Argument is juſt; but ſurely, the frequent *Appeals* made in that reſpect, pretty ſtrongly imply it, were there no other Proof. It looks very odd, and reflects highly on the Underſtanding of the *Apologiſts*, (who, I hope, may be heard by-and-by in this Matter of *Fact*,) that they ſhou'd make ſuch a Stir and Buſtle in the World about an *Eclipſe* of the Sun in a *natural* Way, however dreadful. I think, they might as well have told their Emperors, when they were pleading before them, that the *Peloponneſian* War was *juſt* or *unjuſt*, becauſe the very Year it began, there was a terri-

ble *Eclipſe* ('tis well known,) inſomuch that the *Stars* were ſeen at Noon-day: But their *Apologeticks* ſufficiently ſhew 'em to be Men of excellent Senſe and great Learning; and you can no more doubt of the Genuineſs of thoſe *Works*, than you can of the *Annals* of *Cornelius Tacitus*, or the *Commentaries* of *Julius Cæſar*. 'Tis certain then, the *Eclipſe* taken notice of by *Phlegon*, and appeal'd to by theſe *primitive* Writers, muſt be defended in the Manner you inſiſt it ſhould be, that is, in proving it to be *ſupernatural*. But ſtill, the Argument, in the main, does not turn upon *Phlegon*'s omitting to ſpeak of the *Eclipſe* being when it was *full Moon*. It has been obſerv'd already, that by the unanimous Conſent of all Aſtronomers, there cou'd not have been any *natural* Eclipſe, during the eighteenth Year of *Tiberius*; and if there had, your own Reaſon and frequent Obſervation tells you, that in a *natural* Eclipſe, there cou'd not be *Darkneſs* for *three* Hours; as there really was in the preſent Caſe. The *Evangeliſts* ſay in expreſs Terms, that our Saviour began his *Miniſtry* the fifteenth Year of *Tiberius*; it appears likewiſe, that he continu'd in the *ſame*, for *three* Years; that he kept *four Paſſovers* with his Diſciples, and about that Time ſuffer'd Death for us; after which there was *Darkneſs* over all the Earth from the ſixth to the ninth Hour. As to *Phlegon*'s not mentioning the *full Moon* therefore, it ought to be conſider'd, that he was writing as an *Annaliſt*, and not as an *Aſtronomer*; or rather,

ther, in my Opinion, he *copy'd* purely and ſimply as he found this extraordinary *Event* enter'd in the *publick Records*, and did not trouble himſelf with *Aſtronomical* Calculations, or at leaſt might not then have his *Tables* at hand. But, Sir, if what I have ſaid in this Matter does not give you full Satisfaction, I muſt tell you once for all, that an *Eclipſe*, if at the Time of the *Paſſover*, (which was the Time unqueſtionably when our Saviour ſuffer'd) muſt be when the *Moon was at full*; for ſo the Almighty in the *Jewiſh* Law *commanded* it. Here's at hand a curious and judicious Enquirer into the Nature of the *Jewiſh* Laws, * who ſpeaks thus to the Matter in hand. "The divers keeping of the "*Paſſover* ſeemeth to have taken the Beginning "from the divers keeping of the Month; for "when they reckon'd their Month from the *Ap-*"*parition*, which was doubtful and uncertain, "hence it came to paſs, that the Beginning of "the Month was not always at the ſelf-ſame "Period; for the laſt Day of *Adar* might fall "out ſo, that it ſhould be the Beginning of "*Niſan*; and therefore the *Sanhedrin* appoint-"ed, that the *Full Moon* ſhould be the *thir-*"*teenth* Day, which according to the Verity "was the *fourteenth*; this Diverſity aroſe of "this, becauſe of the divers *Apparitions* of the "*Moon*, ſo they kept the Preparation to the "*Paſcha* diverſly." *In the fourteenth Day of*



* *Weemſe*'s Explanation of the *Ceremonial* Laws of *Moſes*, &c. p. 90.

*the firſt Month is the Lord's Paſſover*, ſays the Text, (*Levit.* xxiii. 5.) you can no more diſpute the Truth of the *Jewiſh* Laws, than you can of *thoſe* made in the *Greek* and *Roman* Commonwealths; and 'tis as plain, that Chriſt *comply'd*, in keeping theſe *Paſſovers* at the ſame Time as the *Jews* did. *Then drew nigh the Feaſt of unleavened Bread, which is called the Paſſover; and the Chief Prieſts and Scribes ſought how they might kill him*, (Luke xxii. 1.) *And it came to paſs, when Jeſus had finiſh'd all theſe Sayings, he ſaid unto his Diſciples; Ye know, that after two Days is the Feaſt of the Paſſover, and the Son of Man is to be deliver'd to be crucify'd*, (Mat. xxvi. 1.) I hope, you don't require more to be ſaid for eſtabliſhing this Point, that our Saviour *ſuffer'd* when it was *Full Moon*; and this may amply ſupply the *Deficiency* in *Phlegon's Teſtimony*, which you object to; tho' I think what has been ſaid for him juſt now, was a ſufficient Excuſe in that Reſpect: However the *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon*, as the Caſe now ſtands, is entire, and of full Force again.

*B.* You ſay, that Chriſt kept the *Paſſover* at the ſame Time the *Jews* did, and therefore it muſt be *Full Moon* when he ſuffer'd: But does it appear from the *Texts* you have quoted, or any otherways, that the *Jews* and *Chriſt* did eat the Paſſover upon the *ſame* Day?

*A.* I grant, 'tis a Queſtion, that may, and has been put before now; but, I think, it will do you little Service at this Time, which way ſoever it be reſolv'd: However, I'll give you the *Reſolu-*

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*tion* of the ſame learned Perſon* I quoted juſt now, upon it, and if you think fit to reply, I am ready to hear you. "Chriſt, ſays he, obſerv'd the *true Day*; in the End of the *fourteenth Day*, and the Beginning of the *fifteenth*, he eat it betwixt *two Evenings*: But the Jews *transferred* the Day; and eat it in the End of the *fifteenth* Day, and Beginning of the *ſixteenth*; and therefore when Chriſt eat the *Paſſover*, it was the Day of the *Preparation* to the *Jewiſh* Paſſover, altho' indeed it was the *true* Paſſover." And is not this Reſolution agreeable to the *Jewiſh* Law, and the *Fact* it ſelf in regard to the *Time* of our *Saviour*'s Suffering? Does not the *Jewiſh* Law ſay, *In the firſt Month, the fourteenth Day of that Month, between the two Evenings is the Lord's Paſſover*, (Lev. xxiii. 5.) alluding to the Charge given by God to the People of *Iſrael*, when he was leading them out of the Land of *Egypt*, that they ſhou'd have their Lamb in Readineſs againſt the fourteenth Day of the firſt Month, when they were to kill it *between the two Evenings*, Exod. xii. 6.

*B.* I don't ſee much Room left for making any *Reply*; and am now convinc'd it wou'd turn to little Account, if I did; if you pleaſe, we'll diſmiſs *Phlegon*; we have had him a long While before us, and *I think* you have made the *moſt* of him; much more, I muſt own, than I at firſt imagin'd. I think, you ſaid ſome Time ago, that you had another *Heathen* Writer in *petto*, that liv'd

* *Weemſe*, Ib. p. 89.

liv'd even in the *firſt* Century, and was able to give *Evidence* as to this *Darkneſs* at Chriſt's *Crucifixion:* I am ready to hear him, when you will; and pray what is his Name?

*A.* He is often ſpoken of by the *Fathers* under the Name of *Thallus*; and they generally join his *Teſtimony* with that of *Phlegon's*, the one to ſupport the other. 'Tis ſo done by *Minutius Felix* in his *Octavius*; by *Tertullian* in his *Apologetique*; by *Juſtin* in his *Exhortation to the* Gentiles; by *Lactantius*, and ſome others. *Thallus* was a *Grecian*, living, as I ſaid before, in the *firſt* Century, and writ, it ſeems, the *Syriac Hiſtories* with great Exactneſs, in Conjunction with one *Caſtor*, who, *Voſſius* believes, and with a good deal of Reaſon, was the Son of that *Caſtor* whom *Cicero* has made famous by his Invectives againſt him. Now, this *Thallus* in his *third* Book of the *Syriac Hiſtories*, takes Notice "in a par-"ticular Manner of this *miraculous Darkneſs at* "*Noon-day*, and of its ſo hap'ning in the *eigh-*"*teenth* Year of *Tiberius*'s Reign.

*B.* I find, this *Thallus* comes handed down to us by the *Fathers*, whilſt they were pleading their own Cauſe; I have often told you, I don't like it; let the *Teſtimony* come directly from ſome *Heathen* Writer, and I ſhall be much better ſatisfy'd.

*A.* Pleaſe to conſider a little, Sir: The *Teſtimony* of *Thallus*, or any other Heathen Writer, that comes to us in this *Manner*, comes with greater Force, and carries greater Authority with it,

than by any other ſort of Conveyance. For, in the Caſe of an *Appeal* from *Chriſtians* to *Heathens*, if the *Heathen* Author that is quoted; if his *Works*; and if moreover any particular *Paſſage* in ſuch *Works*, are all allow'd of, and not the leaſt Objection made; this certainly muſt be *recognizing* ſuch Author, ſuch his Works, and ſuch particular *Paſſage* in his Works, in the ſtrongeſt Manner poſſible. You do not queſtion, nor indeed can you, whether ſuch *Apologies* were really made for the Chriſtian Religion; and you may as well queſtion *Cicero*, (whom I juſt now nam'd) when he tells us, * there was ſuch a Man as *Protagoras*, and that he vended ſuch and ſuch impious Diſcourſes, as diſpute here about *Thallus* and the *Paſſage* already mention'd to be in his Works.

*B.* 'Tis true; I have already in ſome meaſure allow'd of ſuch ſort of Proof from the *Fathers*, as being *reaſonable*; and therefore ſhall preſs it no farther: But have you any ancient Writer, and of good Credit, who writes profeſſedly as an *Hiſtorian* or *Chronologer*, and not as an *Apologiſt*, and who takes any Notice of this *miraculous Darkneſs* at ſuch Time? If ſo, I deſire to hear him.

*A.* I think, I am able to oblige you with ſuch an Author too, that will anſwer in every Reſpect what you deſire: 'Tis the celebrated *Julius Africanus*, who flouriſh'd not above three or fourſcore Years after *Phlegon*, and was once ſent by

* De Nat. Deorum. L. 1.

by his Countrymen of *Nicopolis*, as Ambaſſador to the Emperor *Antoninus Heliogabalus*, to obtain ſome Priviledges; in which Embaſſy he was ſucceſsful: This noble *African* compil'd an excellent Work, much valued by all the Learned, written in a *Chronological* Way; and containing, in *five* Books, a compendious but accurate Hiſtory of all remarkable Occurrences in the World, from the Creation to the Reign of *Heliogabalus*. *Julius Africanus* was a *Chriſtian*, and may be reckon'd the firſt and moſt ancient Hiſtorian that the Chriſtians had: Now, this Man in his *Chronology* remarks in the ſame Manner, as *Phlegon* and *Thallus* had done, (the one in his *Olympiads*, the other in his *third* Book of the *Syriac Hiſtory*,) that there was an *Univerſal Darkneſs*, putting the World under the greateſt *Conſternation* at the very Time when our Saviour *ſuffered*.

*B.* I find by this Teſtimony of *Julius Africanus*, that the *Darkneſs* was *univerſal*; and I obſerve in general from the *Teſtimonies* you have alledged to corroborate (as you think) the *Scripture* Account of this *Darkneſs*, that you would have it thought to be *univerſal*, or over *all the Earth*; whereas by the *Scripture* Account, the *Darkneſs* ſeems to have extended itſelf no farther than the Land of *Paleſtine*: *Beza* * accordingly renders it, *ſuper univerſam regionem*; and I can't but be of the ſame Opinion with that learned Commentator, *viz.* That the Miracle ſtill appears greater, if at the Time of the *Paſſover*, when it was *Full Moon*, and

* Mat. xxvii. 45. Mark xv. 33.

and when at Midday, the Sun ſhould ſuddenly withdraw its Light from that little Corner of the Earth *only*, where this great Scene of Chriſt's Suffering was acted, and yet the *whole* World beſides ſhould enjoy its Light at the ſame Time.

*A.* 'Tis true, Sir, there is Room for ſuch a Conjecture; but you muſt own, it can do your Cauſe no Service, were it to be ſupported, as I am ſatisfy'd it cannot: Indeed our *own Verſion* in Part, ſeems to favour this Conjecture; for we render the *Original*, in St. *Matthew*,* *over all the Land*; in St. *Mark*, *over the whole Land*: But in St. *Luke* 'tis render'd, *over all the* EARTH,† which beſt anſwers the Import and general Acceptation of the *Greek* Word. The *Septuagint* uſes the very ſame *Word*, when the *Earth*, in general muſt be underſtood, and not any one Part of it: *The* Earth *was without Form, and void*:‡ As to *Beza*'s Verſion, 'tis to be obſerved, that the *Syriac*, as 'tis render'd by *Tremellius*, (and which beſt agrees with the Original *Greek*,) runs throughout the three Evangeliſts, *over all the Earth*, or *over the whole Earth*:‖ And had *Beza* and our Tranſlators been living, when the *Syriac* Tranſlation was made, I'm ſatisfy'd there would have been no ſuch Caution us'd by 'em, in rendering this Paſſage. But you ſay with *Beza*, that the *Miracle* appears greater, in not ſuppo-

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* Mat. xxvii. 45. ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.
† Luke xxiii. 44. ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν.
‡ Gen. i. 2.
‖ Super univerſam Terram. — Super totam Terram.

ſing the Darkneſs to be *univerſal*, but rather confining it to that Place or Country, where the Scene of Wickedneſs was more particularly acted in *crucifying the Lord of Glory*. I will freely ſpeak my own Senſe of this Matter, whatever Weight it may have with you. Our Saviour's Crucifixion, it muſt be allow'd, had a Relation to the Sins of the *whole* World, and not of *thoſe* only who liv'd in the Land of *Paleſtine*: This *miraculous Darkneſs*, therefore, was properly the *Sanction*, or the Method taken by infinite Wiſdom, to manifeſt his Wrath and vindictive Juſtice, in the Death of our Redeemer: And if ſo, then ſuch *Sanction* of divine *Wrath* may be reaſonably ſuppoſed to be made known at that Time to *all Mankind*. *In* Adam *we all died*; and when the Time was come, that *in Chriſt we ſhould all be made alive*, I muſt think, that this *miraculous Darkneſs*, out of which *Light* was to ariſe to the *Gentiles*, was notify'd by our heavenly Father to *all* his Creatures, I mean to the fallen Race of Mankind in general, as well as to the People of the *Jews*.

*B.* I do not make any Objection to this ſort of *Reaſoning* of yours; but are there any publick *Records* to ſupport the Truth of the *Fact*; I mean, the Darkneſs being *univerſal*. I own, you have proved this *Darkneſs* to be *miraculous*, whether we ſuppoſe it to have been *univerſal*, or *particular*: 'Tis therefore for my own private Information, that I now ask you, whether this Matter can any Ways be cleared up; or whether there be any *Authentick Teſtimonies* extant at this Time of Day upon the

the Face of the whole Earth, to evince ſuch *Darkneſs* to have been *univerſal*?

*A.* You are pleas'd to allow of my *Reaſoning* upon this Point; but your Queſtion now, let me tell you, is *unreaſonable*: However, if you'll venture to believe that great and learned Prelate Monſieur *Huet*,* Biſhop of *Avranche* in *France*, lately deceaſed; and if in Conjunction with him, you will give Credit to the Hiſtory of *China*, written by *Hadr. Greſlon*; and to *three* other Writers, *Couplet*, *Intorceta*, and *Rougemont*, who ſay the ſame Thing in their Account of *Confucius*; I ſay, according to theſe Authors, there are at this Day ſurprizing *Monuments* extant, for the Honour of the Chriſtian Religion, in the Empire of *China*, to ſupport this *Fact* of an *univerſal Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Crucifixion: The *Chineſe*, all the World well knows, have been long diſtinguiſh'd for their Skill in *Aſtronomy*, as well as for their Exactneſs in recording and fixing their *Epocha*, or proper Period in all great Events: Now, according to this Authority here given you, the *Chineſe* have been particularly careful by remarking in their *Calendars*, or *Annals*, "That under the Reign of their ſage Prince "QUAM-VU-TI, there was a *total* Eclipſe of the "Sun in the Month of *April*; with which the "King was exceedingly ſurpriz'd; for (ſay thoſe "*Annals*) it happen'd contrary to the regular "Courſe of Nature, [*i. e.* when it was *Full Moon*,] "putting their Aſtronomers into the utmoſt Con-

 "fuſion;

*In his *Demonſtratio Evangelica*.

" fuſion ; and their *Epocha*, or Year aſſign'd, " when this *extraordinary* Eclipſe happen'd, an- " ſwers (our Authors ſay) preciſely to the " *fourth* Year of the *two hundred and ſecond Olym-* " *piad*, which was the *eighteenth* Year of the " Reign of *Tiberius Cæſar*." Now admit or reject this Relation, as you pleaſe ; I will not knowingly inſiſt upon any *Authority*, where it can with any Colour be diſputed ; though I cannot ſee any Exception to be made to this Relation, unleſs it be that the Relators were *Roman Catholicks* ; which, in my Opinion, ought to be of no Force or Weight at all in this Caſe: For though they (confeſſedly) may have ſuch Ends in View, as, by introducing the *Chriſtian* Religion amongſt the *Chineſe*, to introduce and inculcate ſuch *Doctrines* withal, which we think are not to be found in, or juſtify'd by that *Goſpel* which they publiſh ; yet their *Appealing* to the *Chineſe* Annals, in reſpect of this *wonderful Darkneſs*, and ſhewing the exact Conformity of ſuch *Annals*, in Point of *Time*, with what is ſaid in the Goſpel, may ſtill be admitted as a good Proof of our Saviour's *Divinity*, and of the Truth of his Doctrine in general: And *that*, you muſt grant, is ſufficient for my preſent Purpoſe.

*B.* I do grant it ; nor am I for uſing ſuch Methods to invalidate your Evidence for this *particular Fact* ; for, upon ſuch *Facts*, the *Romaniſts* cannot *ground* any of thoſe *Errors*, which we condemn as *ſuch*, though they may find other Means to introduce 'em amongſt the *Chineſe*. I grant,

grant, the *particular Fact* in queſtion now is only, Whether there was ſuch a Perſon as *Jeſus Chriſt*, whoſe Divinity was *recogniz'd* by this *miraculous Darkneſs* at his Death; and whether ſuch an *extraordinary Eclipſe* of the Sun was not taken notice of at the *ſame Time* by the *Chineſe*, inhabiting the extreme Parts of the Earth, and was ſo recorded by them? In ſuch a Caſe, I agree, the *Credibility* of the Authors you cite ought to be conſider'd in another Manner, than in barely ſaying they are *Roman Catholicks*: And ſince the Subject is of that Importance, and, as you ſay, ſo much for the Honour of the Chriſtian Religion, if this *Fact* can be fully made out from the *Chineſe* Annals; I think, inſtead of rejecting or condemning the *Evidence* given by ſuch Authors, their Evidence may ſtill ſtand good, 'till (as there ought to be) a ſtricter Enquiry ſhall be made into it; and in this Manner, if you pleaſe, we'll drop it at preſent.

*A.* Agreed; I think 'tis now high Time to claim the Promiſe you made me ſome Time ago, that *Tertullian* ſhould be heard in a proper Place, touching this *miraculous Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Paſſion. He *appeals* then to the ſame *Roman* Records, or *Archives*, that *Phlegon* and others had recourſe to, in that famous *Apology*, which he made with ſo much Argument and Eloquence in behalf of the Chriſtians, during the Reign of *Severus*. He ſpeaks of this *Eclipſe*, as one of the greateſt, the moſt authentick, and moſt extraordinary Events, that had ever happen'd

pen'd in the Univerſe: He ſets it forth boldly and openly, as a *Prodigy* that was well known over all the Earth: He repreſents *it* as a *Fact* publick, prov'd, and avow'd; and to which their own *Annals* had all along bore Witneſs. Now, can it be imagin'd, that *Tertullian* could ever have been induc'd to ſpeak of this *miraculous* Eclipſe in ſuch a Manner; with ſuch a confident *Air*; and to ground all he ſaid upon the very *Records* they were in Poſſeſſion of, before whom he was pleading, if he had not been very ſure of his Point? when nothing more was to have been done to give him the Lye, and entirely ruin all *Chriſtians* and their Cauſe at once, than to have produced thoſe very *Annals*, or *Records* he was *appealing* to? About *fifty* Years after *Tertullian*, *Origen* entered the Liſts with *Celſus* the *Epicurean*, in publiſhing (towards the latter End of his Days) that admirable Work, which we ſtill have preſerved, and is generally eſteemed, as the moſt compleat Performance amongſt all his Works extant. He there proves irrefragably the *Divinity* of our Saviour from this *wonderful Darkneſs*, as alſo from the *Earthquake* that was felt at his Death under the Reign of *Tiberius*. He makes *Phlegon* alſo his Voucher for theſe Things; for he well knew, he was ſuch an Author they could make no Objection to; he being of the ſame Religion with themſelves; and beſides, *Phlegon's* Chronicle was at that Time read by all the World. I hope, Sir, by this Time I have left you no Room for queſtion-

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ing the Truth of that *Fact*, which has been the Subject of our preſent Conference; I mean the *miraculous Eclipſe* and *Earthquake* that happen'd at our Saviour's Crucifixion: You ſee how well, how fully the *Teſtimonies* of *Heathen* Writers bear Witneſs to *thoſe* of the primitive *Fathers*; and how *both* of them confirm the Account given of this *Darkneſs* in the Holy Scriptures. The *Evidence* therefore given by *Heathen Writers* has ſufficiently prov'd the grand Point of all, *viz.* the *Divinity* of our bleſſed Saviour; and that there was juſt Reaſon for the *Exclamation* made by the *Areopagite*, upon this *miraculous Eclipſe*, which he himſelf was witneſs to, *viz. Either the Divine Nature ſuffers, or elſe now ſympathizes with him that does ſo.*

*B.* If you pleaſe to remember, before we left the *Park*, and came into your Study here, I frankly own'd to you, that I was ſincerely diſpos'd to hear all you cou'd offer in Defence of the *Chriſtian Revelation*; and I muſt now farther own to you, that the *Evidence* which you have produc'd from *Heathen* Writers, as to this particular *Fact* of the *Eclipſe* and *Earthquake*, in Defence of it, has given me no ſmall Satisfaction; and as often as I read the Hiſtory of our Saviour's *Paſſion* for the future, the concurrent *Teſtimonies* you have brought, will have their true Weight, and muſt create an inward Pleaſure withal. But before I take my Leave of you, I wou'd willingly know the Reaſon, why you juſt now touch'd ſo lightly upon the *Teſtimony* of the *Areopagite*, which

which is a *Teſtimony* ſo well known, and which I expected you wou'd have produc'd, when you firſt ſet out upon this Sort of Proof.

*A.* I deſire it may not be forgot, what I told you at the Beginning of this *Conference*, that I wou'd deal with you in this Affair (as being an Affair of the laſt Conſequence) with the utmoſt *Sincerity*; though (as I beg Leave to remind you once more) your *Fraternity* in this Reſpect are notoriouſly deficient themſelves, and therefore ought to be ſuſpected. Now, the Reaſon of my not inſiſting on this *Teſtimony* of *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*, is, becauſe ſome Criticks do not appear fully ſatisfied, as to the *Authority* on which the Writers of the Life of *Dionyſius* ground this *Exclamation* of his; Dr. *Cave* makes a Scruple, when he ſays, *If Credit may be given to the Writers of his Life*;* and yet that great Man aſſigns no Reaſon for ſuch *Scruple* neither. There are many learned Men, who do not in the leaſt queſtion the Truth of this *Fact*; I mean of *Dionyſius*'s being at *Heliopolis* in *Egypt*, when our Saviour ſuffer'd, and when the *ſurprizing Darkneſs* extorted ſuch *Exclamation*; and they aſſign ſeveral Reaſons to ſupport the *Fact*; as being deliver'd down in a traditionary Way, for above *eleven* Centuries; and as having the Judgment alſo of ſome eminent Writers, ſuch as *Cyrill*, *Ephrem*, *Maximus*, *Sophronius*, and *Juvenal* Patriarch of *Jeruſalem*, in favour of this *Fact*: However,

* Si vitæ ejus Scriptoribus fides ſit adhibenda. *Cave*, Hiſt. Liter.

However, it being a *Fact* that has not been univerſally admitted, I chuſe rather to leave *it* with you, under the Diſadvantage of ſuch a *Scruple*, than to join or place *it* with other *Facts* that are *inconteſtable*. As to thoſe remarkable *Teſtimonies* that have taken up the greateſt Part of our Time, and were produc'd from the *Records* of the *Roman* Empire; the *Syriac Hiſtories* of *Thallus*; and the *Olympiads*, or *Phlegon*'s Chronicle; I make it my Requeſt now, at parting, that you will in particular reflect on them at your Leiſure; and I am glad to hear you ſay, that the *Evidence* I have already produc'd in *this Manner*, has given you no ſmall Satisfaction. I can aſſure you, I am as much pleas'd to ſee, that you dare be *honeſt* in your Enquiries after eternal Happineſs, which is an Attempt your *Fraternity* are loth to make, though the ſtrongeſt Principle (which is *Self-Intereſt*) ſhou'd lead 'em to the doing of it. When you next pleaſe to favour me with your Company in this Place, you ſhall have farther Proof given you from other *Facts*; and in the ſame *Manner* as we have now proceeded; I mean, in ſticking cloſe to ſuch *Evidence* as *Heathen* or *Jewiſh* Writers may afford us for the Truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*; give me Leave only to remind you of the *Rule* that your *Fraternity* has laid down in their *New* Book, (though they by no Means obſerve *it* themſelves,) *viz.* that in theſe Inquiries, *You ſtill continue to uſe thoſe Faculties which God has given you to judge with, after the beſt Manner you can.*

Let this *Sincerity* appear in our next Conference, and I make no Queſtion but you will be ſtill farther convinc'd, that the *Goſpel Revelation* is from *God*; and conſequently with Mr. *Lock*, (as I quoted him before) you will likewiſe *rejoice in the Light of Revelation, which ſets us at Reſt in many Things; the Manner whereof our poor Reaſon* (ſays he) *can by no Means make out to us.*

*B.* Adieu! my good Friend. My Soul is full of Thought upon this important Subject; which I believe will *ſoon* occaſion you the Trouble of a ſecond Viſit.

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# CONFERENCE II.

*A.* GOOD Morrow, Sir. This early Visit makes me hope for more of your Company than I had the last Time.

*B.* —— Sir, I am come to give you more Trouble. This *Room* gives me a fresh Pleasure; and I can venture to tell you, that I begin to have a better Opinion of those old *Fathers* there, than I had when I was here before.

*A.* I presume the Reason of that is, because you found their *Testimonies* (alledg'd in our last Conference) sufficiently supported by the *Evidence* that I produc'd from *Heathen* Writers; or rather that they supported one another.

*B.* 'Tis true; and I want to hear more of such *Evidence* touching some other *Points*, wherein the Truth of the Christian Religion, I shou'd think, is very nearly concern'd. I shou'd be glad, if *Heathen* or *Jewish* Writers can enable you to clear up some such *Points* to my Satisfaction.

*A.* You know, I am under the strongest Obligations already, to give you all the Satisfaction possible in *that Way*. Please then to let me know what the *Point* is, that you wou'd have first discuss'd; and then, upon examining the Collection of *Testimonies* here lying before us,

it will ſoon appear what *Evidence* you may expect from *Heathen* or *Jewiſh* Writers.

*B.* The Point is this: After I had read over carefully the Hiſtory of our Saviour's *Paſſion*, (which I aſſure you, I did before I clos'd my Eyes that Evening, when I parted with you in this Place,) and had ſpent ſome Time in reflecting upon the *miraculous* Eclipſe attending it, and the undoubted *Evidence* you had brought from *Heathen* Writers to confirm that Part of the Hiſtory; I found, by looking back, that Chriſt had *propheſied* in a very remarkable Manner, but *two* or *three* Days before he ſuffer'd, concerning the *Deſtruction* of *Jeruſalem*, the *Temple*, and the whole *Nation* in general. Now, this is a Part of Scripture that becomes you to clear up, and to ſet in the fulleſt Light poſſible, if you are able to do it. For I muſt own, I take it to be a *Prophecy*, that may be ſtil'd a *Fundamental* one; a *Prophecy* that ſeems to be the beſt *circumſtantiated* of any other: The *Facts* are pointed out in a moſt diſtinguiſhing Manner, not only by the *three* Evangeliſts, but by ſeveral *Prophets* long before; I deſire therefore, this *Prophecy* may be the preſent Subject; and let me hear what *Heathen* or *Jewiſh Evidence* you have relating to its Accompliſhment; or ſuch as may prove and explain this remarkable Piece of ſacred *Hiſtory*.

*A.* Sir, I have *Roman* and *Jewiſh Evidence*; both of them ready at hand, to give you full Satisfaction in what you deſire: But before I

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ſummon thoſe Writers, I can't but obſerve, that when our Saviour's *Predictions* in this Affair of *Jeruſalem* and the *Jewiſh* Nation, are well weigh'd, with the ſeveral Circumſtances taken notice of by him, they look rather like an *Hiſtorical* Abridgment of what is paſt, than a *Prophecy* of what was to happen near *forty* Years after; and the whole (take it altogether) muſt be an undoubted Argument of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and its Doctrines.

*B.* Upon ſecond Thoughts, before you produce your *Evidence* or *Authority*, for confirming this *Prophecy*, pleaſe to give a ſummary Account of *it*, as it ſtands recorded by the *three* Evangeliſts; ſince you ſay it looks ſo like a Hiſtory, rather than a Prophecy.

*A.* It appears from them, * that our Saviour at the latter End of his Miniſtry was frequently inculcating this grand Affair on the Minds of the *Jews*; letting 'em know that their *Deſolation* and final *Overthrow* was near at hand; that ſo when it ſhould come to paſs, they might remember it was the juſt Puniſhment of Heaven for their *Infidelity*. He declares to them, in the plaineſt Terms, a dreadful *War*; points out the laſt *Siege*, wherein their City *Jeruſalem* ſhou'd be entirely ſubverted; the horrible *Famine* they were to ſuffer; the falſe Prophets that ſhould deceive; their Diſperſion over the Face of the whole

* Matt. xxiv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi.

whole Earth; the *Abomination* of *Deſolation* in the *Holy Place*, that is, the Profanation of the *Temple*, as well by placing *there* the Images of the *Roman* Emperors, as by the numberleſs Murders that ſhou'd be there committed; the frightful *Circumvallation* or caſting up of the Trenches round about 'em, that none might eſcape the divine Vengeance: He explains to them how, by a long Courſe of Wickedneſs, the Wrath of Heaven was drawn down; gives 'em certain Signs, whereby they might know the exact Time, when God would inflict theſe ſevere Puniſhments upon them; and it was but *three* Days before his Paſſion, as you obſerv'd, when our Saviour (for the laſt Time) going out of the *Temple*, took an Occaſion of propheſying in ſo remarkable a Manner concerning the Deſtruction of it.* *One of his Diſciples ſaith unto him, Maſter, ſee what manner of Stones, and what Buildings are here; and Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Seeſt thou theſe great Buildings? there ſhall not be left one Stone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down.*

*B.* If I might be excus'd for interrupting you a few Minutes, I ſhould be glad to know, what might induce this Diſciple, or any other, to admire ſo much *this Structure*, when I think 'tis agreed on all Hands, that the *firſt* Temple was vaſtly ſuperior to the *ſecond* in every reſpect?

*A.* Your

* Mark xiii.

*A.* Your Obſervation is juſt in the main: But in one *Reſpect* the *ſecond* Temple was unqueſtionably more *glorious* than the *firſt*, being that wherein the Redeemer of *Mankind* appear'd; agreeable with what *Haggai* * had long before propheſy'd; *The Deſire of all Nations ſhall come, and I will fill this Houſe with Glory, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts; the Glory of this* later *Houſe ſhall be greater than of the* former, *ſaith the Lord of Hoſts; and in this Place will I give Peace, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* With this Reſtriction, I ſay, your Obſervation's juſt: For otherwiſe the *ſecond* Temple, which *Zerubbabel* rebuilt, did by no Means equal the Splendor and Grandure of the *firſt*: *Solomon*, in *one* Article only, had allotted a hundred thouſand Talents of Gold, and ten hundred thouſand Talents of Silver, which his Father *David* had left him for that Purpoſe, with other immenſe Diſpoſitions of the like Nature: And yet this *ſecond* Temple, tho' in theſe Reſpects inferior to the *firſt*, was look'd on by the *Gentiles*, as one of the *Wonders* of the World. And indeed there was Reaſon why they and others ſhou'd eſteem it as ſuch; when 'tis conſider'd what vaſt Additions were made to this *ſecond* Temple by King *Herod*, ſirnam'd the *Great*; the Number of *Portico's*, *Piazza's*, and other Buildings, beſides the magnificent Decorations with which he had inrich'd it *within*; and theſe *Imbelliſhments* might probably be the Occaſion of an Error, that ſome have run into

* Chap. ii. 7, 9.

into in this Matter, as thinking that *Herod* had been the Founder of a *third* Temple; tho' the Prophet *Haggai* aſſures us of the contrary; and the ſame has been ſubſtantially prov'd and confirm'd by others.* There was Room enough then, you ſee, for the Diſciples, or any other curious Obſerver, to wonder at the Structure of this *ſecond* Temple, when taken altogether. By the Deſcriptions that are given us, the Stones were very remarkable for their *Whiteneſs*, as well as *Firmneſs*, but chiefly ſo, for their prodigious *Size*; of which we can hardly form an Idea: For according to *Joſephus*,† every one of thoſe *Stones* was five and twenty Cubits long, twelve Cubits broad, and eight Cubits high; and all theſe vaſt *Stones* were ſo link'd together, and conjoin'd with Lead and Iron, that this Temple ſeem'd likely enough to laſt as long as the World it ſelf.

*B.* This Digreſſion has much oblig'd me. Pleaſe to proceed in finiſhing the *Scripture* Account of this *Prophecy*; and then I am ready to hear your other Account of it from *Heathen* and *Jewiſh* Writers.

*A.* I have little more to obſerve, than that our Saviour inform'd his *Diſciples* as well as the *Jews*, that the *Time* of this Deſtruction of the *Temple*, when *there ſhou'd not be left one Stone upon another*, and when all theſe *Evils* ſhou'd befal their Nation, was very near at hand; ſo near,

 that

* Vide *Saliani* Annales ad A. M. 4035.
† Antiq. Jud.

that the preſent Race, the Families then in Being, ſhou'd ſee and feel it all. *This Generation ſhall not paſs away, till all theſe Things be fulfilled.* So remarkable a *Prediction* made a very ſtrong Impreſſion on the Minds of the *firſt* Chriſtians. *Thirty-two* Years after our Saviour had *propheſy'd* in this Manner, when *Ceſtius*, Governor of *Syria* came with a great Force before *Jeruſalem*, (which was about *ſix* Years before the laſt and famous *Siege* under *Titus*) the *Chriſtians* ſoon call'd to Mind what our Saviour had ſaid, as alſo the expreſs Command he had given them, that they ſhou'd quit the *Plain* of *Judea*, and retire to the *Hill-Country*: *Then let them which be in Judea flee unto the Mountains.** Accordingly they retir'd to *Pella* in good Time, which is a City in the mountainous Country, upon the Confines of *Judea* and *Arabia*; and though there were many Thouſands of Chriſtians, 'tis well known, in *Jeruſalem* and the adjacent Parts before the *Siege* began, yet there was not *one* to be found, when the City came to be taken.

*B.* I muſt now remind you of what you ſaid ſome Time ago, that you had both *Roman* and *Jewiſh* Evidence ready, to make good the *literal* Accompliſhment of this *Prophecy*: It ſeems to be a proper Time now to produce it, which ſhall be carefully attended to.



* Mat. xxiv. 16.

*A.* It has pleas'd infinite Wiſdom, that this *grand Event* ſhou'd be tranſmitted to Poſterity by the united Teſtimonies of *Jew* and *Gentile*; and particularly ſo, by two of the moſt eminent Hiſtorians that the *Jews* and *Romans* cou'd boaſt of; I mean *Joſephus* and *Tacitus*: The former had a conſiderable Command in the *fatal* War himſelf; the latter was a *Pretor*, as well as *Conſul*, and might have been an Eye Witneſs of all the *Facts* in queſtion, that are related in his Hiſtory. I would farther obſerve, that the ſame overuling Providence ſo order'd it, that about two Centuries afterwards, the Emperor *Tacitus* was very ſollicitous in preſerving this important Hiſtory; ſeveral *Copies* being placed by his Appointment, in the moſt eminent Libraries; and this done yearly at the publick Expence.

*B.* I think *Tacitus* the Hiſtorian, was a profeſſed Enemy to the Chriſtian Religion, and Cotemporary with *Pliny*, that gives *Trajan* an Account of the *Chriſtians* Conduct, in one of his Epiſtles.

*A.* You are right, Sir; and, let me add, that there was an entire Friendſhip * between *Tacitus* and *Pliny*; and yet in regard to the *Chriſtians*, their Thoughts and Diſpoſitions were widely different. The latter appears, by his own Letters, to be of a ſweet, affable Temper, humane and equitable; and when he gives a Character of the *Chriſtians*, 'tis plain, he does it in the moſt favourable and genteel Manner; whereas the former,

* Plin. Lib. vii. Ep. 20.

mer, we may obſerve from his Works, was naturally of a malign and ſpiteful Temper, more inclin'd to give a wrong, than a kind *Turn* in his Way of Thinking; and as to *Chriſtians* and our Religion, he formed the moſt hideous Ideas poſſible, and has painted them both in the moſt frightful Colours. You ſee this in his *Annals*,* where he is remarking, with a great deal of ſatirical Wit, upon the Luxury, Debauchery, and Cruelty of *Nero*; that Emperor regaled himſelf for ſix Days together at the Sight of his own City, which he had ſet on Fire; and finding it neceſſary to put a Stop, and to appeaſe the People, who were juſtly incenſed at him, as the Author of that general Calamity, bethought himſelf of this Expedient, in charging the *Chriſtians* with all that had been done; upon which the Hiſtorian gives the following Character of the *Chriſtians* and their Religion, though, as vile and falſe as the Emperor's Charge itſelf was; he ſpeaks of them, as a People *odious to Mankind*, and calls their Religion a *dangerous Superſtition*. I think much the ſame Way of talking is in your *new Book*, call'd, *Chriſtianity as old as the Creation*, &c.

*B.* Let that Reflection paſs at preſent, if you pleaſe: I deſire to know, if you can give any Account how *Tacitus*, and other Heathens came to entertain ſuch odd Notions of the *Chriſtian* Religion, and whence ſuch an Inveterency againſt its Profeſſors?



* Lib. xv.

*A.* The Account, as I take it, is this: There was a popular *Error* that had been long current, againſt which *Tacitus* was by no means Proof; and I make no queſtion, it was what did very much prejudice him againſt the *Chriſtians*, and put him into an ill Humour as to their Religion. The Error was this, in *confounding* the *Chriſtians* with the *Jews* ſo much, as to make no Difference between one and the other: The *Gentiles* proceeded upon this Principle; that the Origine of both People was one and the ſame; that they had the ſame ſacred Books; and that they worſhipp'd the ſame God: Now, 'tis well known what Antipathy, what Contempt *Tacitus* had for the whole *Jewiſh* Nation, for their Ceremonies, their Behaviour, and their Religion in general: We need only turn to the *fifth* Book of his Hiſtory, where we ſee the many Falſhoods and Calumnies rais'd againſt that unhappy People, the *Jews*. He ſpeaks of them, as a curſed, deteſtable ſort of People, both in Reſpect of their abominable Crimes, and their infamous Superſtitions. And 'tis on Account of theſe Calumnies, that *Tertullian* in his *Apologetick*, calls *Tacitus* a great *Lyer*. For *Tacitus*, firſt of all, advances it as a Truth, in the moſt ſerious Manner, that the *Jews* came from the Iſland of *Crete*, and that their *Name* was deriv'd from Mount *Ida*; that in Proceſs of Time, theſe *Jews* being driven out of *Egypt*, where they had taken Refuge, had like to have all periſh'd by *Drought* in the Deſarts of *Arabia* (where they wander'd for a long Time under

under the Conduct of their *Chief Moſes*, had not a Company of *wild Aſſes* that were kicking and friſking about upon the Rock, ſhew'd them the Way to a Fountain, for quenching their Thirſt; and this ſtupid People, ſays he, by Way of Acknowledgment for the Favour, in being reliev'd in ſuch Extremity, did ever after worſhip the *Head* of a wild *Aſs*, as their God and great Deliverer.

*B.* This is a very odd Story, I muſt confeſs; and I ſhould be glad to know where *Tacitus* had it.

*A.* This and other ſilly *Stories* of the like Nature, that you meet with in *Tacitus*, 'tis eaſy to ſee, were all fetch'd from the Works of that celebrated Grammarian of *Alexandria*, one *Apion*, an avow'd Enemy of the *Jews*: This *Apion* the Emperor *Tiberius*, by way of Deriſion, uſed to call *Cymbalum Mundi, a noiſy Fellow*, or a great *Braggadochio*: His Boaſtings were ſo intolerable, that nothing leſs than *Immortality* was to be the Portion of ſuch, to whom he dedicated any of his Books. *Pliny jun.* ſpeaks every whit as contemptibly of *Apion*, in his *Preface* to his Uncle's *Natural Hiſtory*, where you may find an Account of this Matter. 'Tis very certain, that this *Apion* was the Man, that firſt invented this ridiculous Fable of the *Jews* worſhipping the Head of an *Aſs*; and in thoſe bloody *Invectives* which he publiſh'd againſt that People, he gives it out with the ſame Aſſurance, that this *Head*, which was of maſſy Gold, was found under the Foundation of the

*Sanc-*

*Sanctuary*, when the fam'd *Antiochus*, during the Time of the *Macchabees*, pillag'd the City and Temple of *Jeruſalem*. Now theſe idle Tales firſt fram'd by *Apion*, and then adopted by *Tacitus*, gain'd ſuch Footing in the World, that they generally paſs'd for eſtabliſh'd Truths, and (what was generally the Caſe with the *Chriſtians*) they ſoon ſuffer'd under the like Imputation with the *Jews*. The *Chriſtians* were charg'd with worſhipping the Head of an *Aſs* in their private Aſſemblies; and this abſurd Report obtain'd ſuch a general Belief, that, in the Emperor *Severus*'s Reign, they inſulted the *Chriſtians* on that Account, by publickly expoſing a Picture, wherein was to be ſeen a ridiculous Figure of this pretended *Deity*; a ſort of a petty Monſter, with the long Ears of an *Aſs*; a Horn or Hoof inſtead of a Right Hand, in which was placed a great Book open; the Figure it ſelf muffled up with a *Doctor*'s long Robe; and at the Bottom of the Picture was this Legend, *Chriſtianorum Deus Ononychites*. The Particulars you may read at your Leiſure, if you pleaſe, in *Minutius Felix* and *Tertullian*, their Apologeticks.

*B.* You have ſaid enough of *Tacitus*, to convince me, how much he was prejudiced againſt Chriſtianity; and therefore, I think, I may in Juſtice own to you, that his *Evidence* ought to have the greater Weight, whenever you pleaſe to produce it; and I hope you'll excuſe the Trouble I have given you in making theſe *Digreſſions*.

*A.* Since

*A.* Since what I have ſaid of *Tacitus* adds Weight, in your Opinion, to the *Evidence* I am going to produce, it ſhou'd not, methinks, be call'd a *Digreſſion*; and therefore I had rather you wou'd think, I have not been *out of the Way* at all, whilſt I have been talking of *Tacitus*. To proceed then; notwithſtanding the Spite and groundleſs Malice you have obſerv'd in this *Hiſtorian* againſt the *Chriſtian* Religion, he has produced irrefragable Arguments in its Defence. This, as I obſerv'd of old *Phlegon*, was not done *wittingly* or *willingly*, but by the Appointment of him who governs all Things; and yet, whenever we read the *fifth* Book of his Hiſtory, one wou'd think he writ it on purpoſe to bear his Teſtimony to *one* of the brighteſt Truths contain'd in the Goſpel.

*B.* I make no Objections, as to an over-ruling Providence in this Affair: But I think, if you are minded, that the Evidence you are going upon, ſhou'd have its full Force, and effectually ſerve the Intereſt of the Cauſe you are defending, 'tis neceſſary your Hiſtorian appear to have done theſe *two* Things; the one is, that there be an exact and particular Account given of ſuch *Facts* in his Hiſtory, as are particularly mention'd in *Chriſt*'s Prophecy: The other is, that though your Hiſtorian be allow'd to have no Religion himſelf, there ought to be the Marks, however, of *Fidelity* in what he relates; and moreover, his Relation ought to raiſe in the Minds of his Readers a thorough Senſe and

Conviction

Conviction that there was ſomething *divine* and extraordinary in thoſe *Facts* relating to the Puniſhment of the *Jewiſh* Nation.

*A.* What you require is but reaſonable; and I will now let you ſee that *Tacitus*'s Account of this Matter fully anſwers in both Reſpects; and no *Facts* cou'd have been recorded in a Manner more advantageous to the *Chriſtian* Cauſe, than they are done by this *Heathen* Writer, and alſo by *Joſephus* the Jew. They were both profeſs'd Enemies of our Religion, and I ſhall produce the Teſtimonies of both; each ſupporting one another. The ſeveral Inſtances of divine Vengeance *foretold* to the Jews in the Goſpel, and in the Prophets, may be reduc'd to *five* or *ſix* general Heads, which will eaſily comprehend all the reſt. 1. The Siege of *Jeruſalem*. 2. The Diviſions and Civil Wars amongſt the *Jews* themſelves. 3. The Deluſions of falſe Prophets amongſt them. 4. A terrible Famine. 5. The taking and entire Subverſion of that wretched City, as well as the Temple. 6. The Diſperſion of, and Hardneſs of Heart in that unhappy People. Now theſe two *Chiefs* in Hiſtory, (the *Roman* and the *Jew*) have inform'd us, that, about *thirty-eight* Years after our Saviour's Paſſion, whilſt great Numbers were yet alive in *Jeruſalem*, who had either a Share in his Death, or were Witneſſes thereof, and recollected what he had propheſied to them; this unfortunate City was for the *laſt* Time beſieg'd in Form by *Titus*; the Command of which his Father

Father *Veſpaſian* had given him, being oblig'd himſelf to return into *Italy* to take Poſſeſſion of the Empire. This young Prince, with vaſt Labour and Expence, encompaſs'd the City with a mighty Wall, fortify'd with Towers and Redoubts, as ſtrong as the City it ſelf had. But the War without the City was nothing in Compariſon to *that* within it; where there were *three* Factions, all in Arms, falling foul on one another; cantoning themſelves in *three* different Parts of the City; and filling the Whole with Blood and Carnage. Such was the Infatuation, that they were running continually about the Streets like Madmen; and thoſe who were but ſuſpected to deſire Peace, and to have an End put to their general Calamity, were inhumanly put to Death for the ſame. A ſore Famine, amidſt this Blood, Rapine, and Violence, ſoon rag'd amongſt them: They cou'd have no Succour from *without*, and yet there were *two* or *three* Millions of Souls to be maintain'd *within*; and ſtill to increaſe their Miſery, thoſe *three* Factions conſpiring to ruin one another, burnt thoſe little Proviſions that were left in their Magazines. And hence you may eaſily judge what the Miſeries were that muſt befal 'em during the whole Time of the Siege.

*B.* I deſire to know, if either of your Hiſtorians have obſerv'd the *Time* when that terrible *Famine* began, and how long the *Siege* laſted.

*A.* They inform us, that the Siege laſted near *five* Months; that it began in the Month of *April*, and that the *Famine* happen'd in the Month following. A *Meaſure* of Wheat or Barley was ſold for a Talent, or about *one hundred and fifty Pounds* of our Money; and ſome ſold their Houſes and Eſtates to purchaſe that Way. The Famine increaſing carried off whole Families at once; and nothing more common, than to ſee Men like Shadows in the Streets, trailing about full of Pain, and on a ſudden tumbling down and giving up the Ghoſt in a fainting Fit. The poorer Sort were *preſently* interr'd at the publick Expence, to prevent (if poſſible) the Infection ſpreading: But this Precaution was not long of any Service; when they began to throw their Dead over the Walls of the City: And one of their Deſerters aſſur'd *Titus*, that from the fourteenth of *April* to the firſt of *July* following, *one hundred fifteen thouſand eight hundred and eighty* Corpſes had been carry'd out at that one Gate alone, where he had been a Centinel, without reckoning ſuch as their Parents had buried at their own Charge; the Stench of the *Jewiſh* Carcaſſes became a very great Nuiſance to the *Roman* Camp; and as other Deſerters inform'd 'em, the Beſieged growing weary in thus carrying out their Dead, they laid 'em at laſt in Heaps in their greateſt Houſes, and when full, they ſhut 'em cloſe up. Tears were now no more to be ſeen, nor Groans any longer heard in *Jeruſalem*; an implacable *Neceſſity*

*ceſſity* had dried up the very Fountain of Grief; chill'd the Blood; and deſtroy'd all natural Affection; *the Love of many*, ſays our Saviour, *ſhall wax cold*; a ſullen Silence prevail'd every where; no one complain'd for his Dead, nor yet lamented his own Condition; and ſeveral crept into their Father's *Tombs*, where they waited for Death, that they might not want a Grave. our Hiſtorian farther informs us, that whilſt Affairs were in this melancholy Poſture, and Things reduc'd to the laſt Extremity, there were not wanting factious diſcontented Perſons, who broke open Peoples Houſes, rifling the Poor of a few Weeds and wild Plants which they had gather'd without the Walls of the City, and ran the Riſque of their Lives in doing it. They maſſacred Women, as well as old Men, that offer'd to diſpute parting with the little Bread that was left 'em; and the very Children, whoſe Fingers were too tenacious of a Morſel, had their Brains daſh'd out for it. And yet, notwithſtanding ſuch Barbarity, the Hiſtorian obſerves, that theſe Ruffians in a certain Houſe once retir'd with the utmoſt Horror and Confuſion, having ſurpriz'd a certain Gentlewoman, diſtinguiſh'd by her Birth and Fortune (*Mary* the Daughter of *Eleazar*) eating her own Son, that ſhe had ſuckled; Famine and Deſpair urging her to that inhuman Action. *Woe to them that give ſuck in thoſe Days*, ſays our Saviour.

*B.* I would not willingly interrupt you in an Account you are giving, which is ſo very ſurpriſing in all its Parts; and ſurely your *Authors* muſt have been very ſenſible themſelves that the Hand of God was in theſe Proceedings. But I think you ſaid ſome Time ago, that the Famine began the very next Month after the Siege; and that the Siege laſted near five Months: You have likewiſe taken notice of great Numbers deſtroy'd by their own Swords and unheard-of Barbarities, as well as by Famine: Now, whence was it, or what Reaſon can be aſſign'd, that in ſpite of ſuch a long Train of Misfortunes, and ſuch dreadful Extremities to which I perceive they were reduc'd, they ſhould ſtill hold out ſo long, and continue themſelves wretched with ſo much Obſtinacy?

*A.* There was a general *Infatuation*, occaſion'd chiefly by a great Number of *falſe Prophets*, that were riſen up amongſt them; who were every Day deluding 'em by vain Promiſes of an infallible, miraculous and ſpeedy Deliverance, dinning in their Ears, as coming from the Lord, ſuch Expreſſions as theſe, *I will break the Roman Bonds aſunder*; *and the Day of Salvation is at hand*; when yet they were juſt upon the Brink of Deſtruction, and no Way left to eſcape the powerful Hand of *Titus*. Thus they were amuſing themſelves with imaginary Victories; and their Extravagancy was carried to ſuch a Height, that no leſs than the Empire of the Univerſe

was

was in a little Time to be their Lot.* I don't therefore wonder to see you surpriz'd at this Account; and I frankly own to you, 'tis such an *Infatuation* (take it with all its Circumstances) that would not easily gain Credit, were it not attested in the Manner it is. Besides *Josephus*, *Tacitus* † himself tells us, "That the *Jews* were "firmly persuaded from some old Prophecies in "their sacred Books, that the Eastern World was "at that Time to resume its Strength, and that "such, as shou'd prescribe Laws to the Universe, "were to come out of the Land of *Judæa*. There were three remarkable *Factions*, I observ'd to you some Time ago, in *Jerusalem*; *Eleazar*, who was at the Head of one of them, was after some Time defeated, and his Force dissipated; the other two Chiefs, nam'd *John* and *Simon*, thereupon acted like two Tyrants; who apply'd to themselves those Prophecies that had already been accomplish'd in the Person of Christ, and could only be understood as relating to his *spiritual* Kingdom; and moreover they cou'd not doubt, after so noble a Defence made by the *Jews*, but they should be recogniz'd as *two* Kings, as was formerly done in the Case of the *Machabees*; and having driven away the *Romans*, they would have nothing left to do, but to share the Government of the World between 'em.

*B.* Gross

* Dion, L. 60, † Hist. L. 5.

*B.* Groſs Stupidity! and a ſevere Puniſhment it was indeed: But what might the Behaviour of *Titus* be, when he ſaw ſuch Obſtinacy in this miſerable People?

*A. Titus*, tho' he was full of Wrath at theſe Proceedings of the *Jews*, was however unwilling to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*; and therefore, as *Dion* has remark'd, he ſhew'd double Diligence for ſaving it, offering 'em a General *Amneſty*, if they would think better of it, and return to their Duty: But all the generous Offers made by that Prince were inſolently rejected. *Titus* at length began to think of another Method, that he judg'd more likely to work upon 'em, and to bring 'em over to their Obedience; and that was the *Mediation* of our Hiſtorian *Joſephus*; for firſt of all, he was a *Jew* and a Fellow-Citizen; he was one of their Prieſts, and an able Man for managing ſuch an Affair; his Birth moreover, as well as his Profeſſion, being a *Phariſee*, had diſtinguiſh'd him amongſt them; he had but three Years before commanded forty thouſand Men in *Galilee*, and ſuſtain'd a long Siege againſt *Veſpaſian*, who after taking the Place, and *Joſephus* too Priſoner, ſoon gave him his Liberty to go where he pleas'd; for *Joſephus* had ingratiated himſelf, by foretelling that both *Veſpaſian* and his Son ſhou'd be Emperors; which, tho' *then* unlikely, ſeem'd *now* to be near accompliſh'd in good earneſt.

*B.* This Project of *Titus* ſeems to have been well form'd for anſwering the Ends he had in view: But what was the Succeſs?

*A. Titus* having ſent for *Joſephus* from *Alexandria*, whither he was retir'd, diſpatch'd him ſeveral Times with Terms to the *Jews* in *Jeruſalem*. Our Hiſtorian relates himſelf in his *ſeventh* Book, how in regard to the Orders he had receiv'd from that Prince, and the natural Affection he had for his Country, he often appear'd before the Bulwarks of the City, and there raiſing his Voice, proclaim'd aloud to thoſe that were on Duty, that they wou'd not periſh thro' their Obſtinacy, but ſpeedily prevent their entire Ruin and Deſtruction, which was inevitable, without imploring the Mercy of the Conqueror; "Save the Holy City, ſays he, ſave the Temple, "the Wonder of the World, which even *Titus* "is *unwilling* to deſtroy; ſave the whole Nation "and your ſelves." *Joſephus* was not diſheartned, though at the ſame Time his good Advice met with no other Return from his Fellow Citizens than Reproaches, Invectives, and grievous Affronts. "I wou'd ſtill merit more at "your Hands, replies *Joſephus*, in this obſtinate "Way of mine, if it might be of Service in "ſaving an ungrateful People, who ſeem, by too "evident Marks of a divine Vengeance, to be "doom'd to a total Deſtruction." But *Joſephus* at length was forc'd to retire, after a dangerous Wound receiv'd in his Head by a Stone thrown down from the Ramparts; and it was not without great Difficulty and freſh Hazard, that they brought

brought *him off* into the *Roman* Camp. At length the Fortreſs *Antonia* being taken by *Storm* about the Beginning of *Auguſt*, the *Temple*, that ſtood near it, ſoon had the like Fate, notwithſtanding the *deſperate* Fury that was ſhewn in its Defence: For as to the *Temple* in particular, the *Jews* thought their Happineſs wrapp'd up in the Preſervation of that Place; and, as another eminent Heathen * Writer remarks, they flatter'd themſelves that Victory and Felicity wou'd be their Lot, if they fell with their Temple. About three Weeks after this, the upper Part of the City, where was Mount *Sion*, being taken, with its three Citadels, *Jeruſalem*, according to our Saviour's Prediction, was entirely overthrown and brought to its fatal End by the Conquerors; who, out of ſo many magnificent Buildings, left only three Towers ſtanding, as a Monument of their Victory, as well as of the ancient Grandure of the City.

*B.* I thank you for this melancholy and ſurprizing Account of *Jeruſalem*. The *Scripture* Account you gave before, does indeed (as you obſerved) look more like an *Hiſtorical* Abridgement of what was paſt, than a *Prophecy* of what it ſeems, happen'd ſo many Years after. But, methinks, the *Heathen* Hiſtorians ought to have made Apologies to their Readers for delivering ſuch Things as Matters of *Fact*, and yet ſo very *unaccountable*.

*A.* You

* *Dion.*

*A.* You requir'd *Fidelity*, and very juſtly, ſome Time ago, in our *Hiſtorians*; and, I think, they have given ſufficient Proof of it in this Caſe; and you ſee, we cannot hear or read the Account given by them of theſe *Facts* relating to the Puniſhment of the *Jewiſh* Nation, but it neceſſarily works a Conviction in our Minds, that there muſt have been ſomething *divine* and extraordinary in thoſe *Facts*: And, I think, what you allow'd of your ſelf, is but reaſonable, *viz.* That they could not well write in that Manner, and not be ſenſible that the Hand of God was in ſuch Proceedings; but then, they knew not the Reaſon of ſo ſevere a Viſitation, which was *putting to Death the Lord of Glory*; *a crucify'd Saviour was a ſtumbling Block* to the one, as *it was Fooliſhneſs* to the other. But, after all, I muſt grant, there are ſome *Facts*, that ſeem almoſt incredible; and particularly, I think, the very *Numbers* ſaid by theſe Hiſtorians to have periſh'd in *Jeruſalem* is a *Fact*, that may be thought to need an Apology, as much as any other: But no Apology can or ought to be thought neceſſary, where *Facts* are ſo unqueſtionably atteſted, as they are here: No Hiſtory has better Vouchers, than that of this fatal Siege of *Jeruſalem*: It has the Authority of Authors of the firſt Rank or Figure in the World; Authors, who were either Eye-Witneſſes or Contemporaries, or elſe ſuch as liv'd ſoon after thoſe Times: And as to Eccleſiaſtical Writers, they are all unanimous and punctual in the Relation of this memorable

Event, to evidence an entire *Accompliſhment* of our *Scripture* Prophecies in this Reſpect: Add to this, what the *Jews* themſelves ſtill relate to this Day, and the miſerable *Spectacles* they themſelves are to the whole World, occaſion'd by that general *Diſperſion*: Put all theſe Things together, and I leave you to judge, whether any reaſonable Perſon can deſire ſtronger Evidence for the Truth of any Fact?

*B.* Since you mention'd that Particular, of the great *Numbers* that periſh'd in *Jeruſalem*, what might the Whole amount to?

*A.* The *Numbers*, conſider'd theſe ſeveral Ways; 1. Of ſuch as died by Famine and Sickneſs; 2. Of ſuch as periſh'd by their own Civil Fury; and, 3. Of ſuch as fell by the Hand of the Enemy; amounted in all, to *eleven hundred thouſand Perſons*, in the Space of four or five Months Time. This is what *Joſephus* expreſsly affirms; and 'tis what he wrote, not only in regard to Poſterity, (which might be impos'd on,) but for to be read by many illuſtrious *Romans*, who had ſerved in that memorable Siege: To be read in particular, by the Emperor *Veſpaſian*, and by *Titus* himſelf; to whom he had the Honour of preſenting this Hiſtory; and who was pleas'd with his own *Hand* to atteſt the Truth of the Whole; and alſo to order, that thoſe *Memoirs*, and no other, ſhould ſerve for writing that Part of the Hiſtory of his Reign: In ſhort, *Titus* order'd this Work of *Joſephus* * to be plac'd in the

* Joſeph. in vitâ ſuâ.

the publick Library, with a proper *Encomium*; the Author's Statue was cast, and set up in *Rome*; and King *Agrippa*, who accompanied *Titus* in this Expedition, did our Historian the Honour of writing to him *three* or *fourscore* Letters, which contain an ample Testimonial of *Josephus*'s Sincerity.

*B.* Sir, I cannot question the Sincerity of your Author, after this Account that you have given of him and his Work; and upon recollecting one Particular, which just now comes into my Mind, I begin to think, that there is not so much need (as I thought before) for your Authors making *Apologies*, in relating so many *Facts* seemingly incredible: For as to this frightful Number in Particular of *eleven hundred thousand* Persons, you just mentioned, it does not appear so very strange, when 'tis consider'd, what Authors, *Heathen*, *Christian*, and *Hebrew*, do all unanimously affirm to be true, that no People in the World did so increase and multiply as the *Jews*.

*A.* Your Observation is very just; and the single Family of *Jacob* is a remarkable Instance, who during their Sojourning in *Egypt two hundred and fifteen* Years, multiply'd to the Number of *six hundred thousand Men*, without reckoning Women and Children. Those Authors, from whom you made your Observation, will likewise tell you, that *Jerusalem* was one of the most populous Cities in the East; and they observe moreover, that *Titus* having begun the Siege the first

Day of the Feaſt of *unleavened Bread*, there was conſequently a general *Rendezvous* of the *Jews* there, from all Parts of the World, to keep their Paſſover; by which Means infinite Numbers were ſhut up, without any Means left 'em of getting out again.

*B.* Did *Divine Vengeance* ſtop here, or how did it fare with the *Jews* after the City was taken?

*A.* The grievous Famine, that had raged amongſt 'em, forc'd a great many to pilfer and plunder after the *Romans* had enter'd; and, as our Hiſtorian informs us, the Number of thoſe pilfering *Jews* was ſo very great, that the *Romans*, to terrify others from the like Practices, commonly crucify'd about *five hundred* a Day of them; inſomuch that at laſt, ſays he, there was neither Wood to be got to make Croſſes, nor room to ſet 'em up in; and whilſt theſe Puniſhments were inflicting, the *Arab* and *Egyptian* Soldiers cut the Throats of about *two thouſand Jews* beſides, ripping up their Bellies to find the Gold, which, 'twas bruited in the *Roman* Camp, the *Jews* had ſwallow'd; and *Titus* with all his Power, found it pretty difficult to put a Stop to ſuch inhumane Practices. As to other Places where the *Jews* were, the like Tokens of divine Wrath appear'd; *eight thouſand Jews* were maſſacred in *Joppa*; *ten thouſand* in *Damaſcus*; *thirteen thouſand* in *Scythopolis*; *fifteen thouſand* in *Gadara*, or the Parts beyond *Jordan*; *twenty thouſand* in *Cæſarea*; *fifty thouſand* in the City

of

*Alexandria*, which Place ſeem'd to be floating with the Blood; and the dead Bodies lying in Heaps in the Streets and publick Places: One in particular, ſays the Hiſtorian, named *Simon*, the Son of *Saul*, being fill'd with Horror and Deſpair, catch'd hold of the hoary Hairs of his aged Father, and ſlew him; then cut the Throats of his Mother, Wife, and Children, and afterwards diſpatched himſelf with his own Sword; in ſhort, (not to dwell any longer on this melancholy Subject,) the Number of *Jews* deſtroy'd, on ſeveral Occaſions, in this War, amounted to *thirteen hundred thirty ſeven thouſand, four hundred and ninety Perſons*, beſides others that could not eaſily be brought into the Account. I have now given you a full View of the terrible Vengeance of an offended God, executed on a miſerable People, for *two* of the greateſt Crimes that Mortals were capable of committing; I mean, their putting to Death the *Lord of Life and Glory*, and then obſtinately adhering to what they had done, without the leaſt Signs of Repentance. This terrible Vengeance was foretold by the *Prophets* many Ages before; but it was *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, who was to denounce it to the *preſent* Generation, that was to feel the diſmal Effects of it; and this Vengeance was denounc'd in Terms ſo expreſs; the bloody Scene drawn with ſuch ſtrong Lines; repreſented with ſuch diſtinguiſhing Marks and Circumſtances attending the fatal Blow, that (as both of us have already obſerved in our Turns) it looks more like a ſhort *Hiſtory*,

*tory*, than a plain ſimple Prophecy. *Verily I ſay unto you, all theſe Things ſhall come upon this Generation:* O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *which killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto Thee: How often wou'd I have gather'd thy Children together, as a Hen doth gather her Brood under her Wings; and ye would not? Behold, your Houſe is left unto you deſolate.** What a heavenly *Pathos* is there in theſe Words! He was the *expreſs Image of his Father*, and, as *ſuch*, he expoſtulates with his diſobedient Children: Obſerve the Antitheſis —— *How often would I* —— *But ye would not.* —— He had called upon them long before, under the *Jewiſh Diſpenſation*, by *Angels*, by *Prophets*, by *juſt Men*; and now he did it in his own Perſon for *three* Years together, by *Miracles*, by *Exhortations*, by *Threatnings*; all done to retrieve 'em from a State of Miſery, *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*; that by embracing the *New Covenant*, they might become *one Fold under one Shepherd*; that by their Faith and Repentance they might have engag'd him to *defend 'em under his Wings, and to make 'em ſafe under his Feathers*,† (a proverbial Speech common amongſt the Jews:) *His Faithfulneſs and Truth would have been their Shield and Buckler*; and the impending Storm of divine Vengeance would happily have been removed far from them: But, alas! *He beheld the City, and and wept over it, ſaying, if thou hadſt known, even Thou, at leaſt in this thy Day, the Things which*

* Mat. xxiii. † Pſal. xci.

*which belong unto thy Peace! But now they are hid from thine Eyes.*‖

*B.* I have obſerv'd already, you may remember, that your *two* Authors cou'd hardly give ſuch a ſurpriſing Account of theſe Things, but that they muſt have been ſenſible themſelves that the *Hand of God* was *in it*: But does this appear from any expreſs Acknowledgment of their own?

*A.* The Acknowledgments of both of them are very expreſs to that Purpoſe; that there were in thoſe Proceedings ſomething truly *miraculous* and *divine*. *Tacitus*, though in his Conduct he appears to have been notoriouſly looſe and prophane, yet in this Caſe of the *Jewiſh* Deſolation and their final Deſtruction, he ſays, That it was declar'd both from *Heaven*, and on *Earth*, by ſuch unuſual and frightful Prodigies, that neither Prayers nor Sacrifices cou'd avert it.* And when he comes to Particulars, he ſays, That whole Battalions were ſeen engaging in the Air, and that their Arms claſh'd and glitter'd in the Rencounter.† The other Hiſtorian, *Joſephus*, is more particular, who ſays, this happen'd towards Sun-ſet upon the *twenty-ſecond* Day of *May*; that theſe airy Legions were ſeen in all the Country, and ſeem'd to ſpread and extend their fiery Chariots, as if they were forming a Siege.

*B.* This

‖ Luke xix.

* Evenerant prodigia quæ neque Hoſtiis neque votis piare fas habet Gens Superſtitioni obnoxia, Religionibus adverſa. *L.* V.

† Viſæ per Cœlum concurrere Acies, rutilantia Arma.

*B.* This Account puts me in Mind of what happen'd between two and three hundred Years before, when *Antiochus*, ſirnam'd *Epiphanes*, took *Jeruſalem*. There were the like Prodigies, tho' rather greater, uſhering in that remarkable Profanation of the Temple, and Cruelties exercis'd on the *Jewiſh* Nation. This Account we have from the *Maccbabean* Hiſtory, you know, and I ſuppoſe you do not queſtion the Authority.

*A.* The Authority in that *Reſpect* is very good, and I thank you for recollecting in ſo proper a Time: If you pleaſe, we'll read the Paſſage—— *And then it happen'd, that through all the City of* Jeruſalem, *for the Space almoſt of forty Days, there were ſeen Horſemen running in the Air, in Cloth of Gold, and armed with Lances, like a Band of Soldiers; and Troops of Horſemen in Aray, encountring and running one againſt another, with ſhaking of Shields and Multitude of Pikes or Staves, and drawing of Swords, and caſting of Darts, and glittering of golden Ornaments, and Harneſs of all Sorts: Wherefore every Man prayed that that Apparition might turn to Good*, 2 Mac. 5.

*B.* Has *Tacitus* recorded any other *Prodigies* or extraordinary Occurrences among the *Jews*, that preceded their Deſtruction?

*A.* Yes; two or three more, and thoſe very remarkable; which, he ſays, happen'd in the very *Temple*, and the very ſame Year with the former. The *Temple* firſt of all, as he informs us, was illuminated on a ſudden, in a dark Night,

as if it had been Noonday; * and *Joſephus* more particularly remarks, that this happen'd about the *third* Hour after Midnight, and the *eighth* Day of *April*; which, as it fell out, was the Day of the *Paſſover* that Year, and was look'd upon by the moſt judicious, as a Sign of the *Temple*'s being to be deſtroy'd by Fire, as it was accordingly *five* Years after. Whilſt the ſame *Paſſover* was kept, the *Eaſt* Door of the *Temple*, which was made of *Braſs*, and ſo heavy, that it requir'd *twenty* Men to ſhut it at Night, (ſecur'd by Iron Bars and otherways in the ſtrongeſt Manner) open'd nevertheleſs of its own Accord all of a ſudden, about Midnight †. *Joſephus*'s Remark is, that God hereby ſignify'd he wou'd ſoon open and deliver up the *Temple* to the *Gentiles*. The ſame Year, upon the Day of *Pentecoſt*, when the Prieſts went into the *Temple* at Night, according to Cuſtom, to do their Duty, they ſoon heard a hideous Noiſe, and perceiv'd ſomething to move about in the *Sanctuary*; after which, upon its moving out of that ſacred Place, they heard a Voice diſtinctly pronouncing and repeating the following Words, *Let us go hence, Let us go hence.* St. *Chryſoſtom* || ſays they were *Angels*, the Guardians of the *Temple*, who having long waited (but in vain) the *Jews* Amendment, declar'd at laſt boldly, that they were quitting the Place, which God now diſal-



* Subito Nubium igne collucere Templum, L. V.
† Expanſæ repentè Delubri Fores. *Tac.* L. V.
|| Hom. 64. in Joſeph.

low'd of, though honour'd with his more immediate Preſence for above a thouſand Years before. *Tacitus*, who (as uſual) gave every Thing of this Kind a Turn in the *Pagan* Way, pretended that they were *the Gods* that went out of the Temple, and that the Noiſe and Stir that was made, was the Sign and Effect of their ſo going out *. But after all that has been obſerv'd, as wonderful and extraordinary in this Affair, I take the actual burning of the *Temple*, with the ſeveral Circumſtances duly conſider'd, to be as great a Prodigy as any of the former. 'Tis certain, that *Titus* did all he cou'd to ſave it, notwithſtanding the ſtrong Remonſtrances made to him, how that the *Jews* were ſo attach'd to their *Temple*, that they wou'd ever revolt ſo long as it ſtood. *Titus* was ſtill obſtinate in their Favour, for preſerving ſuch a ſtately Edifice. But Hiſtorians are not agreed in aſſigning any certain Reaſon of ſuch Proceeding; whether it was purely owing to his natural Temper, or whether Religion had any Influence, (for he wou'd often ſay, *He was not come to fight againſt Heaven*;) or whether there was a laudable Ambition of putting the *Romans* in Poſſeſſion of a *Structure* that was look'd upon as *one* of the *Wonders* of the *World*, and thereby perpetuating the Name of *Titus* the Conqueror. Be that as it will, the fatal Hour was come, and Heaven had ſo decreed, that it ſhou'd

* Audita major humanâ Vox: Excedere Deos: Simul ingens motus excedentium. L.V.

ſhou'd be no longer in the Power of Conqueror or Conquered to ſave the *Temple* from utter Ruin. A *Roman* Soldier, by a divine Impulſe (ſays *Joſephus*) taking a Parcel of Firebrands and by the Help of his Fellow-Soldiers mounting up to one of the Windows, hurl'd the Fire in ſuch a Manner, that the Flame ſoon became general, and in a little Time ſeiz'd the inner Part of that noble Building.

*B.* Since there was ſuch a ſtrong Inclination in *Titus* to ſave it, how did he behave on this Occaſion?

*A.* His Behaviour was ſtill anſwerable to his former Conduct; and he was very ſenſible, that he was the Inſtrument of divine Vengeance, and not the Conqueror himſelf only. *Titus* was juſt gone to repoſe himſelf, after a great Fatigue the Day before, when he and his principal Officers gave the beſt Orders they could for extinguiſhing the Fire; but the Uproar and Diſorder was now ſo great, that his Commands, inſtead of being executed, were ſcarce minded, or any Notice at all taken of them by the Soldiers; for when they had once diſcover'd, that the very *outſide* of the *Holy Place* was plated with Gold, and conſequently concluded what immenſe Riches they ſhou'd find within-ſide, they began to be more outragious, valuing neither the Intreaties nor the Threats of *Titus*, but obſtinately perſiſting to kindle the Fire in one Place, as faſt as their Prince was quenching it in another. And thus the Temple was laid in Aſhes; and

(as it has been obſerv'd) this was done in the ſame Month, and upon the ſame Day, when the former Temple was deſtroy'd by *Nabuchadonoſor*, a little more than *ſix hundred* Years before.*

*B.* You ſaid juſt now, if I remember right, that *Titus* was ſenſible himſelf, that he was the *Inſtrument* of God in theſe Victories he had obtain'd over the *Jews*. A glorious Reflection for an old *Roman* to make! And where's the *Chriſtian* General that does the like? But pray, Sir, what Authority have you for ſaying this of *Titus*?

*A.* His own Words, and his Behaviour after his Victories, are both Witneſſes to the Truth of what I ſaid. *Titus* being deeply affected and aſtoniſh'd at the mighty Things he had ſeen done, conſtantly refus'd all Addreſſes and Congratulations from the Cities and neighbouring Provinces; their Panegyricks always met with this Anſwer; *That it was not he that had vanquiſh'd; that what he had done, was lending his Hand for executing the Wrath of Heaven; and that he ſincerely acknowledg'd, he was no more than a weak Inſtrument in the doing of it.* This remarkable Saying of *Titus* we have preſerv'd to us in as remarkable a Manner, by *Philoſtratus* in the Life of the famous Impoſtor *Appollonius Thyanæus*; * Providence ſo ordering it, that what was wanting in one *Heathen* Writer, ſhou'd be ſupply'd in another. After this, 'tis leſs to be wonder'd at, what other Hiſtorians tells us of *Titus*,

* 2 Kings xxiv. † Lib. 6. c. 14.

*Titus*, that when he had taken a View of the outward Fortifications of the *Temple*, and ſaw with Amazement that all his batt'ring Rams had done no Damage, he ſaid ſeveral Times by the way of an Exclamation, *That if Heaven had not fought for him, meer human Force had never been able to effect what was done.* We are not now to wonder, if he refus'd Crowns of Gold that were offer'd him for doing Honour to his Victories; and that both *He* and his Father *Veſpaſian* wou'd by no Means accept of the Title of *Conqueror of Judæa*, tho' the *Roman* Senate wou'd fain have given it. * In ſhort, thoſe two Princes had too great an Inſight into Things, not to know and perceive, what their Modeſty likewiſe made 'em acknowledge, that the *Jewiſh* Nation could never have ſuffer'd ſuch an Overthrow, if divine Vengeance had not viſibly effected it: But ſtill they were at a Loſs to account for ſuch *Vengeance*, or what that deteſtable *Crime* might be that brought ſuch ſwift and general Deſtruction; which really was, *crucifying the Lord of Life and Glory.*

*B.* I own, you have ſufficiently prov'd what I ask'd of you concerning *Titus:* Both Father and Son ſeem to have had rare Accompliſhments; and ſuch Accompliſhments 'tis plain, did ſerve better to diſplay the Works of Providence in this wonderful Scene of Affairs in *Judæa.* But, if I am not miſtaken, notwithſtanding all their Modeſty, thoſe Princes had ſome *Monuments* to per-

* Neuter Judaicus cognóminatus. *Dio. in Vita Veſp.*

perpetuate their Names on this Account: Pray, inform me.

*A.* You ſay right; and ſuch Monuments are yet remaining to this Day. But 'twas done by Order of the *Senate*, or, to ſpeak more properly, by the particular Appointment of Heaven. One of the Monuments are *Medals* of *Titus* and *Veſpaſian*, ſtruck in Braſs, Silver, and Gold, (to be ſeen in the Collections of the Curious,) having on the Reverſe *a Captive ſitting and lamenting at the Foot of a Palm-Tree* with this Legend, JUDÆA CAPTA. The other Monument, which is the moſt conſiderable, is that ſtately triumphal *Arch* erected at *Rome* againſt the Day that *Titus* enter'd the City, where in *Baſſo-Relievo* of Marble is ſeen at this Day the Figure of that Prince, together with the *Golden Table*, the *Golden Candleſtick*, with the *ſeven* Branches ſupported by eight Perſons; and other remarkable Spoils, brought from *Judæa* and the Temple.

*B.* I ſuppoſe you are now pretty well tired; I'll take my Leave, and go Home, and make the beſt Reflections I can upon this Accompliſhment of ſuch a *Fundamental* Prophecy, as I find it both in the Old and New Teſtament. I thank you for the Pains you have taken, and hope ſoon to pay my Reſpects to you in this Place.

*A.* One Thing occurs, which I deſire, you would take along with you: 'Tis a very remarkable *Prophecy* of the two Apoſtles St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, relating to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, made by *them* when they were deliver'd up to

*Nero*

*Nero* by the *Jews*, about the Year of our Lord 66. 'Tis a very curious Fragment, and being ſo well atteſted, it were much to be wiſh'd it had been plac'd with the other *Acts* of the Apoſtles, and *made Canonical*. It was collected and committed to writing by the primitive Chriſtians: 'Tis recorded by *Lactantius*,* in his *Inſtitutions*; and *Phlegon*, whoſe Honeſty and Integrity we took Notice of in our laſt Conference, whoſe Teſtimony is unqueſtionable, and who writ but about *forty* or *fifty* Years after this Prophecy of the Apoſtles, ſays expreſly in his *Olympiads*,† that St. *Peter's Predictions to the* Jews *concerning their Deſtruction, had been all exactly fulfill'd*. And for farther Satisfaction in this Matter, we need only read *Origen*'s ſecond Book writ againſt *Celſus*. Now the *Apoſtles* declar'd to the Jews as follows, "That the Time "pointed out by *Jeſus Chriſt* for their final De- "ſtruction, was nigh at Hand; that *Jeruſalem* "ſhou'd be beſieg'd, and laid entirely waſte; "that they ſhould ſuffer Famine ſo very grie- "vous that they ſhould eat one another; that "they ſhould ſee their Wives and Children ex- "piring, and a general Ranſack with Fire and "Sword; that they ſhould be baniſhed their "Country for ever, and become Fugitives or "Slaves to the End of the World; and that "all

*Sed & futura aperuit [Chriſtus] illis omnia; quæ *Petrus* & *Paulus* Romæ prædicaverunt; & ea prædicatio in memoriam ſcripta permanſit; in qua cum multa alia mira, tum etiam hoc futurum eſſe, dixerunt; ut poſt breve tempus immitteret Deus Regem, qui expugnaret Judæos, & Civitates eorum ſolo adæquaret, ipſos autem fame, ſitique confectos obſideret, *&c.* *Lact.* l. iv. c. 21.

† Olymp. L. xiii. xiv.

" all theſe Evils ſhould befall 'em on Account " of their Outrage and Offence committed againſt " the Son of God, who had been plainly decla- " red as *ſuch* by the many Miracles wrought " amongſt them." And now, my Friend, put all theſe Things together, that have paſſed between us to Day concerning the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; the ſurprizing Accompliſhment of ancient *Prophecies* relating thereto; the viſible Marks of divine Vengeance, in the whole Procedure; and acknowledg'd as *ſuch*, but not rightly underſtood, by the *Jewiſh* and *Heathen* Writers, and even by *Titus* himſelf: After this, tell me what you think of *Revelation?* Whether our *Reaſon* is not ſufficiently inform'd from the *Teſtimonies* of Heathens, that theſe Things are ſo? That theſe *Facts* are true; and conſequently that the *Scriptures*, where theſe Things are foretold, are truly the *Word* of God, and as ſuch to be regarded by us? I remember, in our former Conference, you ſaid, the *Difficulty* you labour'd under, was, how we could by the Help of our *Reaſon* attain to a certain Knowledge of the *Truth* of thoſe *Facts*, which we call the *Goſpel Revelation*: I have undertaken to remove that *Difficulty* in a way that you juſtly own is unexceptionable, by *appealing* to the Enemies of our Religion, who have (neither wittingly nor willingly) bore their Teſtimony to the Truth of it. The *miraculous* Eclipſe, which was clear'd up and fully eſtabliſh'd from ſuch ſort of *Teſtimony* at our laſt Meeting, does of it ſelf (were there no other Evidence) ſufficiently

ciently eſtabliſh that grand *fundamental* Point, the *Divinity* of our bleſſed Saviour; and, I make no queſtion, if you will but favour me with your Company two or three Times more, you will be convinc'd, that the Truth of the *Chriſtian Religion* appears from *Heathen* Teſtimonies, not only in regard to *Facts*, but to the principal *Doctrines* likewiſe. Your Diſpute about *poſitive* Duties will ſoon have an End, if without Prejudice you will uſe thoſe Faculties that God has given you to judge with in theſe Matters. And remember what you have already agreed to at our firſt ſetting out, *That when by the Help of our Reaſon* Revelation *becomes eſtabliſh'd, no Suggeſtion either againſt the* Need *of ſuch a Revelation, or againſt our* Obligation *to receive it, ought to make any Impreſſion upon us.*

*B.* I am ſtill of the ſame Opinion: And as to my *Reaſon*, the new Book,* which our Society has lately publiſh'd, will bear me out, when *I uſe it after the beſt Manner I can*; *The End is then anſwer'd*, ſays that Book, *for which God gave us our Faculties, and our Conduct is fully juſtify'd.*

*A.* I like the *Rule* exceedingly; but till your *Society* practiſes accordingly, the *End* is not anſwer'd, nor their *Conduct* juſtify'd. *Adieu.* I wiſh you well home, and a quick Return to this Place.

* Chriſtianity as Old as the Creation.

# CONFERENCE III.

*B.* GOOD Morrow, Sir. You see I am very quick in making you this Visit; much sooner, indeed, than I intended at our parting: But when I came Home, and had carefully read over the *Prophecy*, and recollected, as well as I could, the Particulars of its *Accomplishment*, which were the *Subjects* of our last Conversation, I began to think, this Point had not been so fully *discussed* as it ought to be; or at least, as I could wish, for my own Satisfaction. My Meaning is, that this *Prophecy* of our Saviour has not been consider'd by us in its full View and Extent, as the express Words seem to require it shou'd be; for we learn from that *Prophecy*, not only the *Destruction* of *Jerusalem*, and the *Jewish* Nation, as also their *Dispersion*, which are Things already accomplish'd, and have been fully discoursed of; but we learn moreover something else very *material*, which is *yet* accomplishing; and which, according to your Commentators, will not have its final Completion, till *Jew* and *Gentile* at the End of the World shall join with the *Christian* in embracing the Gospel. You easily guess at the Passage; where the Marks of divine Vengeance are stamp'd upon the very *Ground* where

where the Holy City ſtood; and 'tis pronounced, that ſuch Marks ſhall be as *laſting*, as the fugitive Condition of the People; ſo that all human Endeavours ſhould prove in vain for *rebuilding* on that Ground where the *Temple* was founded. This *Part* of the Prophecy is very plain and expreſs, when our Saviour tells his Diſciples *, *They* [the *Jews*] *ſhall fall by the Edge of the Sword, and ſhall be led captive into all Nations*; *and* Jeruſalem *ſhall be trodden under Foot of the* Gentiles, *until the Times of the Nations be fulfilled.* And this *Part* I deſire may now have its due Conſideration; and, if you can, pray inform me, whether ſuch *Part* of the Prophecy has been *fulfilling* by any *ſignal* Marks of Divine Vengeance, in relation to that Place, in the ſucceeding Ages of the *Church*. For if ſuch *Marks* ſhall appear, ſupported by good Authority, I readily grant, you will then have produc'd another very cogent Argument in Defence of *Chriſtianity*.

*A.* I much rejoice at this good Diſpoſition in my Friend; that he has read over the *Prophecy* with ſuch Attention; that he has made ſuch a judicious Remark on a *Deficiency* in our former diſcourſing of it; and that he has now given me an Opportunity of ſupplying that Defect; and as I hope in every Reſpect to his Satisfaction. As to the remarkable *Text* you juſt now quoted, the *Comment* you have made is eaſy and natural, and what the beſt Expoſitors are agreed



* Luke xxi. 24.

in.* And to ſtrengthen this Expoſition, you will ſee preſently that the Emperor *Julian* (the Apoſtate) did ſo underſtand this Text, as well as the Paſſage in *Daniel*, to which it alludes; the Prophet aſſuring us, *That the Deſolation ſhall continue to the End.* *Julian* therefore thought, if he cou'd compaſs the building a *Temple* on the Ground where the former ſtood at *Jeruſalem*, he ſhou'd elude the Force of this *Prophecy*, and render the Truth of the Holy Scriptures precarious. I ſhall now, therefore, according to your Requeſt, farther inform you, that this very Emperor *Julian* did actually attempt, with all the Power, Cunning, and Expence poſſible, to build a *Temple* for the *Jews* where the *Temple* ſtood at *Jeruſalem*; and that he was baffled in this Attempt with the greateſt Marks of *divine* Diſpleaſure, that you can imagine; attended with ſuch fearful *Prodigies*, that they equal, if not exceed, thoſe I took Notice of from *Tacitus* and *Joſephus*, to have happen'd in the *Temple* ſome Time before its Deſtruction.

*B.* If *Julian* made this Attempt with ſuch a Deſign as you ſay he did, it was indeed *daring* Heaven to aſſert its Honour, and the Truth of the *Prophecies*, by ſome extraordinary Puniſhment. But what *Authority* have you for theſe *Facts*, before you give any farther Account of them?

*A.* The

* *Calcabitur à Gentilibus*, i. e. Inhabitabitur Jeruſalem tanquam vile Oppidum ab exteris Gentibus, preſſa jugo Servitutis.—— *Donec impleantur*; — quaſi dicat, uſque ad finem mundi erit deſtructa, vel punietur per Gentiles Tempore ſcilicet & modo quo Deus ſtatuit. *Vid. Menoch. Collect. Comment. ad Luc.* xxi. 24.

*A.* The *Authority* is in every Reſpect unexceptionable. The *Facts* I am going to relate, are atteſted by great Numbers of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as well as *Chriſtians*; but the *Authority* I ſhall chiefly inſiſt on, is *Ammianus Marcellinus*; becauſe he was not only an *eminent* Hiſtorian, but liv'd at the ſame Time; was in great Eſteem with, and a zealous Defender of his Maſter *Julian*.

*B.* Pleaſe to give me ſome *farther* Account of this Author, that I may better judge how far I may rely upon what he ſays in this Matter.

*A.* Methinks, much more need not be ſaid than what has been already. He had the Misfortune indeed of being bred a *Heathen*, and he liv'd and dy'd as ſuch; but was remarkable for doing Juſtice to the *Chriſtians* notwithſtanding. Tho' he was ſtrongly attach'd to *Julian*, yet he does not conceal his Vices; and tho' he was a *Soldier*, yet his Abilities were ſuch, that he knew how to make a Difference in the Characters of the *Orthodox* or *Catholick*, and the *Arians*, at that Time of Day. Conſidering he was a *Greek* by Birth, and the *Time* wherein he wrote, the Purity of the *Latin* Language is not to be expected; but in every other Reſpect he is allow'd to be an accompliſh'd *Hiſtorian*.

*B.* You ſay he was of the *Military* Profeſſion: Did that allow him Time to write a Hiſtory with ſuch Exactneſs?

*A.* He was in ſome Reſpects like a *Cæſar*, or a *Xenophon*: He was either Witneſs to all the

the great Events in his Time, or had a good Share in them himſelf: But as to the compiling his Hiſtory, he did it, after he had quitted his *military* Employments, retiring to *Rome*, that he might have the better Reliſh of Life the Remainder of his Days; having ſerv'd not only under *Julian*, but *Jovian*, *Valentinian*, and *Gratian*. 'Tis our Misfortune, that we have but *eighteen* Books left of the *one* and *thirty* which he compos'd; and the many fine Editions of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, with the Notes of ſeveral learned Men, are a ſufficient Proof what Credit and Eſteem this Hiſtory has obtain'd in the World.

*B.* You need not ſay any more of your Author; and your having ſaid this, will make me hear your Account from him with more Pleaſure and Satisfaction. Pleaſe then, to let me know what *Julian*'s Efforts were for rebuilding the *Temple* at *Jeruſalem*; what hinder'd his Project; and whether in ſuch *Obſtacles* as he met with, there was any Thing *extraordinary* or *miraculous*, or ſuch as evidently and undeniably prov'd the immediate Interpoſition of the *Almighty* in that Affair.

*A.* I am to obſerve to you firſt of all, that *Julian*, when he ſaw himſelf ſole Maſter of the *Empire*, upon the Death of his Couſin *Conſtance*, thought the Time was come, when he need be no longer upon his Guard in Matters of Religion: Accordingly he try'd all Ways to reſtore *Idol-Worſhip*, and to eſtabliſh *Pagan* Superſtitions

perſtitions in general, which were then at their loweſt Ebb, and well nigh expiring. By this Means the *Chriſtian* Religion, if poſſible, was to be aboliſh'd; and he was ſo bold as to imagine, that in a little Time he ſhou'd aboliſh the very *Name* it ſelf. The better to ſucceed in this Project, he form'd a *perſecuting* Scheme, entirely *new*, none of his cruel Predeceſſors having acted like him. He was not contented in ſpiriting up the *Chriſtians*, and furniſhing them with Arms to deſtroy one another, whilſt the *Arians* were openly protected by him; But he ſhamefully demean'd himſelf, in making his Application to the very *Jews*, who were become the Scum and Deriſion of the Univerſe, the better to accompliſh the pernicious Ends he had in View. He writes to 'em accordingly, a very cunning, inveigling Letter, yet extant among his Epiſtles; where, "after having earneſtly "begg'd their Prayers, he lets 'em know, that "he did not require 'em to pay any more Taxes, "as they us'd to do; and that he had caus'd "to be burnt all publick Entries that might any "ways affect 'em; *and then informs them*, that "the happy Time was now come, for retrie-"ving the ancient Glory of their Nation, for "re-eſtabliſhing their Ceremonies, their Laws, "their Synagogues, their *Temple*; aſſuring them "withal, that as ſoon as he had ended the "*Perſian* War, he wou'd rebuild *Jeruſalem* "with greater Splendor than ever it was before, "and that he wou'd come and reſide there him-

"ſelf,

" ſelf, and join with them in worſhipping the " ſupreme Being."

*B.* I muſt confeſs, this Letter ſeems to be work'd up with a great deal of Policy, and Art; and no doubt, it anſwer'd his End with the *Jews*.

*A. Julian* did not ſtop here: He call'd together the *Chiefs* of the *Jewiſh* Nation from all Quarters, and ſummon'd 'em to appear in his Palace; where he reproach'd 'em ſeverely, for having liv'd ſo long, without *ſacrificing* to their God; when it was a Matter, he ſaid, that was ſo expreſsly enjoin'd 'em by their Law.

*B.* This was putting it home indeed; and to be ſure, *Julian* eaſily gueſs'd their *Anſwer* would ſerve his Purpoſe: But how was it?

*A.* The *Jews* anſwer'd, That by their Law they were not to ſacrifice any where, but at *Jeruſalem*; whence they were baniſh'd; and not only at *Jeruſalem*, but it was to be done in the *Temple* there; which yet had been demoliſh'd for about *three hundred* Years. 'Tis for that very Reaſon, replies the Emperor, that I am minded out of hand to rebuild your *Temple* at my own Expence; that you may be able to do your Duty, which has been interrupted ſo long a Time; and the more to encourage 'em, he made 'em believe, that he had recover'd one of their ſacred Volumes (buried under Ground) which declar'd expreſsly, that in *his Reign* their long Exile ſhou'd have an End, and their Synagogue ſhine out in its former Luſtre.

*B.* By

*B.* By this Time I make no queſtion, but enough was ſaid to engage the *Jews*; and I take it for granted, *Julian* and his Aſſembly broke up well ſatisfy'd on both Sides.

*A.* 'Tis true, as you obſerve: And *Julian*, to make good his Promiſe, orders the ableſt Workmen throughout the Empire to attend. He makes one *Alypius* Surveyor-General of the Work, who was his Countryman, and truſty Friend, and who had for ſome Time been a Deputy-Governor here in *England*. He iſſues out Orders to his Treaſury for very large Sums, to defray the Expences neceſſary for building this ſtately Edifice; and after this, he writes to the Governor of the Province to countenance the Undertaking; to forward the Execution; and to give him a regular Account how the Affair went on, which he had more at heart than any other. Our *Hiſtorian*, as a Heathen, wou'd have us underſtand that all this was done by *Julian* with an Intention of eternizing his Name only, by erecting ſuch a Building: But *Julian*, who had been in *Holy Orders* himſelf, had conſider'd the *Scriptures* we muſt allow, and he knew there were *Prophecies* (as I have obſerv'd to you already) expreſsly againſt his, or any other's ſucceeding in this Enterpriſe. His Proceedings in religious Matters, as I did before mention 'em to you, farther ſhew what his Intentions were; and Heaven in a moſt aſtoniſhing Manner (as you will hear preſently) confirm'd the

*Prophecies*, and put a Stop to the daring Impiety of the *Apoſtate* Emperor.

*B.* Before I behold this terrible Scene of divine Vengeance, which I apprehend you are now ent'ring upon, pleaſe to let me know, how the *Jews* behav'd, after *Julian* had given Orders for rebuilding their Temple? as alſo how the *Chriſtians* were affected at ſuch a Proceeding?

*A.* There was an Exceſs of Joy among the *Jews*, as I believe you eaſily imagine: They flock'd together from all Parts of the World, to aſſiſt in raiſing their intended *Temple*. No Coſt was ſpar'd for laying the Foundation with the greateſt Pomp and Solemnity imaginable, and for haſt'ning the Work.* By ſome Accounts, their very *Pick-Axes*, *Shovels* and *Baſkets* for digging and carrying Earth were of *Silver*; and Women of the firſt Rank amongſt them, were ambitious who ſhou'd give a helping Hand, by carrying *it* in the Lappets of their richeſt Garments. As for the *Chriſtians*, the more conſiderate amongſt them were not in the leaſt affected, but ſlighted and deſpis'd theſe Efforts of *Julian*. *Cyril* Biſhop of *Jeruſalem* is a remarkable Inſtance: He was juſt return'd from Baniſhment, when theſe wild Projects were on Foot: But he did not appear any ways concern'd at the freſh Storms that were ariſing againſt the Church of Chriſt. He was Witneſs to the Inſolence, to the Inſults and Threats of the

* Theod. *Lib.* 3. c. 27.

the *Jews*; who were ſo puff'd up with their imaginary State of Happineſs, that they talk'd of nothing leſs, than cutting off that *good Man*, or rather the whole Body of *Chriſtians*, and treating 'em in like Manner, as they themſelves had been treated by the *Romans*. But the venerable *Patriarch* was as little mov'd with their Threats as their vain Preparations: He made it his Buſineſs to comfort the *Faithful*, who were any ways terrify'd at ſuch Proceedings; frequently reminding 'em, that the Word of God was *ſure*, and that they ought to have a firm Reliance on thoſe *Prophecies*,* the Truth of which they wou'd ſoon ſee confirm'd; that the Efforts of their Enemies deſerv'd nothing but their Scorn and Contempt, becauſe the Words of *Jeſus Chriſt* were expreſs; † he having poſitively aſſur'd them, that the *Temple ſhould never be rebuilt*; maugre all the Attempts of the *Jews*, or even *Julian* their zealous Protector; and in fine, he told 'em boldly, that all the preſent Noiſe and Buſtle wou'd end in nothing but in an entire Deſtruction of thoſe few Stones yet left under-ground in the *Foundation* of the old *Temple*; the better ſtill to verify literally the Saying of our Saviour, that there *ſhou'd not be left one Stone upon another*.

*B.* If you pleaſe, Sir, it may now be a proper Time to ask, what was the *Event* of this Enterpriſe, concerted I ſee with all the Artifice



* Ruffin. Lib. 10. c. 38. † Theod. Lib. 3.

imaginable, and carried on with a very high Hand, and a great deal of Buſtle and Clamour?

*A.* The Fact, as recorded by *Marcellinus*, * ſtands thus; "Whilſt *Alypius* was buſy in carry-"ing on the Work, and the Governor of the "Province as careful in giving him his Aſſiſt-"ance, fearful *Balls* of *Fire* came out of the "Earth near the Foundations; ſuch Eruptions "with repeated Shocks ſoon render'd the Place "inacceſſible, the Workmen themſelves being "ſometimes burnt; and the fiery Element con-"tinuing its Oppoſition in this Manner, the "Work was entirely laid aſide." I deſire, it may be obſerv'd, that an Account ſo diſtinct and remarkable, as this is, has been given us by an Hiſtorian, who was, at the very Time when theſe Things happen'd, one of the greateſt Officers in the *Roman* Empire; that he was a great Admirer of *Julian*; and that he was as well able to inform himſelf of this *wonderful Event*, as any Man whatever; not only by common Fame, but from the Relation of thouſands who had ſeen it with their own Eyes. "Thus, ſays St. *Chry-*"*ſoſtome*, † the Word of *Jeſus Chriſt* was not "to be ſhaken; and the Sentence which he had "pronounc'd was verify'd in its utmoſt Extent. *Titus*, as I obſerv'd to you in our laſt Conference, made a vain Attempt to ſave the *Temple*; and *Julian* here ſtrove, to as little purpoſe, to rebuild it. What God is pleas'd to pull down, is not to be rais'd up again by meer human Power;

* Lib. 18. † Orat. 2. in Judæos.

Power; and what he thinks fit to uphold, is not to be thrown down by his Creatures.

*B.* Pray, how do the *Fathers* of the Church agree with *Marcellinus* in this Matter?

*A.* I don't much wonder at your asking that Queſtion *now*, becauſe you have been already convinc'd more than once, that the *Heathen* and *Chriſtian* Writers ſupport one another in many *Facts*; and conſequently ſuch ſort of *Teſtimony* ought to have the greater Weight. The *Church* Hiſtorians, as well as *Fathers*, are generally more particular in relating this *Fact*, than *Marcellinus*; but they all confirm the Account which he has given; and *three* of the *Fathers*, which bear their *Teſtimony* in this Affair, *Gregory Nazianzen*, St. *Ambroſe*, and St. *Chryſoſtome*, were living at the ſame Time when this *Prodigy* happen'd; the remarkable *Teſtimony* of *Cyril* Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, has been already taken Notice of.

*B.* I deſire to hear firſt of all the Account given by the *Church Hiſtorians*; and then, *that* given by the *Fathers* juſt mention'd, whoſe *Teſtimony*, as they were *Contemporaries* with *Julian*, I do agree, ought to be the more regarded.

*A.* The *Church* Hiſtorians* inform us, "That "whilſt the Foundation of the *Temple* was a lay-"ing, a violent *Hurricane* carry'd away in a "Moment, the *Lime*, *Sand*, or *Gravel*, with o-"ther Materials, that had been heap'd in pro-"digious Quantities: This was follow'd by an *Earth-*

*Theod. lib. iii. c. 27. Sozom. lib. v. c. 22. Ruffin. lib. x. c. 38, 39.

" *Earthquake*, which ſuddenly hurl'd to a great " Diſtance, on all Sides, vaſt great *Stones*, that " had been brought together for the intended " Building; threw down the Houſes all round " about; and turned topſy-turvy the *Galleries*, " where Workmen in great Numbers were cruſh- " ed to Death. The *Fire* at the ſame Time con- " ſumed the *Hammers*, *Saws*, *Chiſſels*, and other " Tools, which were lodg'd in a Place under- " ground: Streams of *Fire* ruſhing out of the " Earth, and running here and there, burnt and " deſtroy'd every Thing that came in its Way; " And yet the obſtinate *Jews*, prompted by their " own Inclination, and in Obedience to their " Emperor, would ſtill attempt to carry on the " Work, till they were either forc'd back or " conſum'd by this *miraculous Fire*." Theſe Hiſtorians farther add, that for a Night and a Day there appeared in the Air, from *Calvary* to Mount *Olivet*, the Figure of a *Croſs*, within a Circle; the whole glorioufly illuminated; which Appearance was like a Trophy ſet up in Token of a Victory obtain'd by *Jeſus Chriſt* over his Enemies. They all agree likewiſe in telling us, that the *Cloaths*, as well of *Chriſtians* as *Jews*, were at the ſame Time impreſs'd with the Figure of the *Croſs*; which was ſo beautiful that no *Imbroidery* cou'd equal it; and the *Jews* with all the Pains they took, could not raze it out. And, let me tell you, theſe *Hiſtorians* were chiefly no Friends to the *Orthodox* Party neither;

*Theo-*

*Theodoret* was once a *Neſtorian*,* but repented: *Socrates* and *Sozomen* were both of them *Novatians*;† And *Ruffinus* ſhew'd himſelf at one Time of his Life, like an envious ſurly *Presbyter*, in regard to the great St. *Jerome*. Theſe Hiſtorians however, all liv'd *at* or near the Time, when this *wonderful Event* happen'd; and their Teſtimony in a Matter of *Fact*, is therefore not to be queſtion'd.

*B.* 'Tis certain this Account makes the *Interpoſition* of Heaven ſtill more remarkable: But do theſe *Fathers* of the Church, who liv'd at that Time, deſcend to ſuch Particulars?

*A. Cyril*, Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, had a *Foreknowledge* given him by *Heaven* of the *Fact* in general, as you may obſerve from his *Teſtimony* I've given you already. St. *Chryſoſtom*,** who ſpoke of this *Prodigy* between *twenty* and *thirty* Years after it happen'd, told his Auditors publickly, that many of them *might* have been *Eye-witneſſes* of theſe Things; and he aſſur'd 'em, that the *Foundations* were yet to be ſeen all lying open, as well as the *Remains* of that abandon'd Enterprize. And *Gregory Nazianzen*‖ declar'd as openly, that at the Time of his writing and diſcourſing, thoſe indelible *Croſſes* were ſtill to be ſeen on the Cloaths of *Jew* and *Chriſtian*. And St. *Ambroſe*, in a Letter that he

* Deny'd that the Virgin *Mary* was the Mother of God, and aſſerted two *Perſons* in Chriſt.

† Among the καθαροι, or *Puritans*.

** Orat. 2. in Judæos.

‖ Orat. 4.

he writ ſome Years after to *Theodoſius*, ſirnam'd *The Great*, reminds him of this *wonderful Event*, as a Thing known throughout the Univerſe. In ſhort, the *Fact* in general has been at all Times ſo well atteſted, that we may venture to ſay, ſince the Days of the *Apoſtles*, we meet with nothing either in its ſelf more *aſtoniſhing*, or more *authentick*, than this. And what was the Effect of this dreadful *Repulſe* that *Julian* met with? Nothing leſs than the Converſion of great Numbers, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; who had been Spectators of *it*, and forthwith deſir'd to be *baptiz'd*. And certainly 'twas a noble Subject that St. *Chryſoſtom* * had on this Occaſion to preach upon, when he told his Congregation, " that God was pleas'd to ſhew " the *greateſt* Miracles for eſtabliſhing the *Di-* " *vinity* of his Son, at a Time when *Hell* it " ſelf made the *greateſt* Efforts to ſubvert *it*. And ſurely it becomes us likewiſe to remember the Words of our bleſſed *Saviour*, † (let the *Times* be what they will) *Upon this Rock* [upon ſuch *Foundations* whereby the *Chriſtian* Religion ſhou'd ſoon be eſtabliſh'd] *will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.*

*B.* Sir, before we take our Leave of *Jeruſalem*, pleaſe to inform me, if you have any good Authority, what State or Condition that *Piece of Ground* is in (at this Time of Day) where the *Temple* ſtood?

*A.* We

* Hom. 4. in *Mat.*

† *Mat.* xvi. 18.

*A.* We have as good *Authority* as we can wiſh for in that Particular: We have it from a worthy Countryman of our own, who *view'd* the Piece of Ground (you enquire after) about *thirty* Years ago: But both *Jew* and *Chriſtian* (it ſeems) are ſo far from having any Thing to do *there*, that they are not allow'd ſo much as to *tread* upon *it*. For more Satisfaction, I'll give you the Paſſage it ſelf, which runs thus;* " *Thurſday, April* 8. we went to ſee the Palace " of *Pilate*, I mean the Place where they ſay it " ſtood: For now an ordinary *Turkiſh* Houſe " poſſeſſes its Room. It is not far from the " Gate of St. *Stephen*, and borders upon the " *Area* of the *Temple* on the *North* Side. From " the *Terrace* of this Houſe, you have a fair " Proſpect of all the *Place* where the *Temple* " ſtood; indeed, the only good Proſpect that is " allow'd you of it: For there is *no going with-* " *in the Botders of it*, without forfeiting your " Life, or, which is worſe, your Religion. A " fitter Place for an *auguſt Building*, cou'd not " be found in the whole World, than this *Area*. " It lies upon the Top of Mount *Moriah*, over- " againſt Mount *Olivet*, the Valley of *Jehoſa-* " *phat* lying between both Mountains. This " *Area*, as far as I cou'd compute by walking " round it *without*, is *five hundred and ſeventy* " of my Paces in *Length*, and *three hundred and* " *ſeventy* in *Breadth*; and one may ſtill diſcern

 " Marks

* See Mr. *Maundrell's* Journey from *Aleppo* to *Jeruſalem* at *Eaſter*, 1697, p. 106. Fourth Edit.

"Marks of the great Labour that it coſt, to cut "away the *hard Rock*, and to level ſuch a ſpa- "cious *Area* upon ſo ſtrong a Mountain. In "the Middle of the *Area* ſtands at preſent a "*Moſque* of an *octogonal* Figure, ſuppos'd to be "built upon the ſame Ground, where anciently "ſtood the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the *Holy* of *Ho-* "*lies*. And thus *the Deſolation ſhall continue to the End.*

*B.* I blame my ſelf very much, in not having read that curious and entertaining Book: I find he meaſur'd the *Place* where the *Temple* ſtood, but cou'd not do it with that Exactneſs to be ſure, when he was not allow'd to go upon *it*. Pray, if you'll excuſe this Digreſſion, let me ask one Queſtion more: Did this ingenious Countryman of ours meaſure the *Circuit* of the City? For that, as I take it, was in his Power.

*A.* It was ſo; and Mr. *Maundrel* did accordingly pace the Walls round; and then reducing his *Paces* to *Yards*, informs us, that his *four thouſand ſix hundred and thirty Paces*, amounted to *four thouſand one hundred and ſixty-ſeven Yards*, which make juſt *two* Miles and a Half.*

*B.* I thank you: There's one Thing occurs concerning your Hiſtorian *Ammianus Marcellinus*, which I deſire may be further look'd into: You gave it me, I remember, as Part of his Character, that his Abilities enabled him to make a Diffe-

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* Ibid. p. 116.

rence (though a Heathen) in the Characters of the Orthodox, or *Catholicks*, and the *Arians* at that Time of Day. If he was ſo ſtrongly attached to his Maſter *Julian*, who notoriouſly protected the *Arians*, there's Reaſon to ſuſpect his Judgment was biaſſed in *their* Favour. But how was it, or is there any Light in his Hiſtory, as to this Point?

*A.* There's Light enough in this Matter to ſhew that he follow'd his own Judgment, and not *that* of his Maſter; whoſe Errors, as well as Vices, he ſometimes animadverted upon. He had no Reliſh at all for the *Chriſtian* Religion in general, in what Manner ſoever profeſs'd: He uſes ſometimes very opprobrious Language, and makes it applicable to all Parties amongſt them, repreſenting them as a Company of *wild Beaſts* in their Diſputes with one another; and, like *Gallio, He car'd for none of thoſe Things:* But ſtill his Judgment appears; there's a very remarkable Character given by him, as well of the *Orthodox*, or *Catholick Chriſtians*, as of the Emperor *Conſtantius*, who was a grievous Perſecutor of them. I heartily thank you therefore for reminding me of this Particular; and certainly I ſhould be wanting very much in defending the Cauſe of *Primitive Chriſtianity*, if I omitted a *Paſſage*, which ſo much Sincerity, Honeſty, and Plain-Dealing, as is ſeen in *Marcellinus*, has furniſh'd us with in its Favour. Our Hiſtorian* then, taking Notice of the Confuſion and Irregularities



* Lib. xxi.

committed by *Conſtantius* in religious Matters; in protecting the *Arians*; in often convening 'em; and by ſuch repeated and irregular Meetings deſignedly oppreſſing the *Catholick* Biſhops; has theſe memorable Words; which, as they come from the Mouth of a *Heathen*, not biaſs'd by *Julian*, but following his own private Judgment, cannot be liable to the leaſt Objection. "*Conſtantius*, ſays he, made a ſtrange jumble in religious Matters, by mixing ſilly ſuperſtitious Fancies with the *Chriſtian* Religion; which is a Religion in itſelf ſimple, and all of a-piece, without any ſuch Mixture: His Enquiries into the Nature of that Religion, were rather to perplex Debates, than to compoſe Matters; which frequently occaſion'd Diviſions and Diſſenſions amongſt them: Theſe Diviſions he fomented by *verbal* Altercations, or Diſputes about *Words*. Thus he was continually haraſſing the *Biſhops*, who in great Numbers journey'd backwards and forwards, on Account of what they call their *Synods*; where he endeavour'd that his own Will ſhould be a Law: And by this conſtant Hurry and Fatigue of Beaſts, [as well as Men,] the *publick Stages* at laſt could not hold out any longer.*



*Chriſtianam Religionem abſolutam & ſimplicem anili ſuperſtitione confundens [Conſtantius] in qua ſcrutanda perplexius quam componenda gravius excitavit diſſidia plurima, quæ progreſſa fuſius aluit concertatione verborum, ut *Catervis* Antiſtitum jumentis publicis ultro citroque diſcurrentibus per Synodos, quas appellant, dum ritum omnem ad ſuum trahere conatur arbitrium, rei vehicularis ſuccideret nervos. *Lib.* 21.

*B.* I desire to know, what your Historian means by those *verbal* Altercations or Disputes about *Words*, which he charges *Constantius* with, as one Method taken by him to foment *Divisions*?

*A.* The Meaning is plain enough to such as are vers'd in *Ecclesiastical* History; *Marcellinus*, 'tis easy to apprehend, had an Eye to those two noted Terms of *Homoousios*, i. e. of the *same Substance or Essence*, and *Homoiousios*, i. e. of *the like Substance or Essence*. This Variation of *one Letter* only was made a Handle for distinguishing the *Catholick* from the *Arian*, and was the Occasion of great Distraction and Misery in the *Christian* Church: And here it very well deserves your Observation, where the *Fault* lay, in making such a fatal Distinction amongst Christians; for, a great many well-meaning People (to my certain Knowledge) have unwarily been made to believe, that the Fault lay at the Door of the *Orthodox* Party, in coining *new Words*, not to be met with in the *Scriptures*, and multiplying *Creeds*, not serving to any other Purpose than to perpetuate Strife and Discord in the Church. Now, please to observe; *Marcellinus*, as he was a *Greek*, must be allow'd to have understood the *Scriptures* of the *New Testament* in their original Language; and I think, 'tis as little to be doubted, but that his fine Parts, and liberal Education induc'd him to read *them*; if only out of Curiosity, as well as his Master *Julian*; nay, considering the Honesty, Plainess, and Simplicity, that appear'd in *Marcellinus*, I

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am apt to think, he might have ſurmounted the Difficulties of an unhappy Education, and made a glorious Figure in the *Chriſtian* Church, as other *Heathens* had done before him, had not the violent Diſſentions and barbarous Practices which he obſerv'd amongſt the Profeſſors of an excellent Religion, given juſt Offence, and prov'd the great Stumbling-Block in his Way. We may eaſily imagine, this was the Caſe with Thouſands as well as *Marcellinus*; and the *Arians* muſt anſwer for it, as well as they can: But this by the Way——*Marcellinus* knew, what the *Chriſtian Religion* in it ſelf was, or elſe he cou'd not have call'd it, as he does here, *Religionem ſimplicem & abſolutam*, which I render a *Religion ſimple, pure, and unmix'd, and all of a-piece*; (and let our *Arians* give a better Tranſlation if they think fit.) *Marcellinus* as plainly diſtinguiſhes the *Notions* that *Conſtantius* had in Religion (which he blended with the *Chriſtian*) as *idle ſilly Opinions:* So he expreſsly charges; *confundens chriſtianam religionem anili ſuperſtitione. Marcellinus* knew that the Word *Ouſia*, or *Eſſence*, was not a Word *coin'd* by the *Catholicks*; becauſe he found it in the ſacred Writings; he knew the *Catholicks* maintain'd (or rather ſhall we ſay, he was Judge himſelf from thoſe Writings?) that the *Father* and the *Son* were there declar'd to be of the *ſame Eſſence*; but then he obſerv'd, that the *Arians* evaded this, in ſaying, that the *Son* was not of the *ſame* but of a *like Eſſence* with the *Father:*

How-

However in the Judgment of *Marcellinus*, we are to reckon *this* was one of *Conſtantius's* *ſilly idle Opinions*; and indeed, how can it be eſteem'd otherwiſe by any conſiderate and unprejudic'd Perſon? For tho' *Sameneſs* and *Likeneſs* are Terms really different, and as *ſuch* are applied to *Things* in general; yet to ſay, that there is a *Likeneſs* and not a *Sameneſs* in the Essence of Things, is, in my Apprehenſion, little better than meer *Jargon*. For what is *Eſſence* in the Corporeal World? Does it not ariſe from the various Contexture of the Parts of a Body? (which Contexture however we are as little able to *explain*, as we are the *Eſſence* of Incorporeal Beings.) But will it be ſaid, that one Body may be of the *like Eſſence* with another Body, and yet not of the *ſame Eſſence* with that Body? Is not this telling us, that two Bodies may have the very *ſame* Contexture of Parts, (which conſtitute their *Eſſence*,) and yet that they may be only *like* and not really the *ſame* with one another in ſuch Contexture? Can any Thing be more groſs or abſurd? And therefore, as we muſt judge it very improper, to ſay there may be a *Likeneſs*, and not a *Sameneſs* in the Essence of Bodies; ſo was it highly improper for the *Arians* to uſe the compound Word *Homoiouſios* in their Diſputes with the *Catholicks*; for if they would not allow of the *Sameneſs* of *Eſſence* in the *Father* and the *Son*; they were told, no doubt, (or at leaſt they ought to have been ſo,) that *Likeneſs* of *Eſſence* is unintelligible Stuff;

nor

nor shou'd any Person presume to question a *Mystery*, who can admit and defend such *Inconsistencies*. 'Tis plain, *Marcellinus*'s good Sense quickly discover'd the weak, evasive Arguments in the *Arian* Party; or else he wou'd not have animadverted with that Freedom, as he does, upon the Conduct of *Constantius*, who propagated *these meer* VERBAL *Disputes*; which he himself must know had nothing of Weight in them, but serv'd his Purpose very well; and that was to oppress the *Catholick* Party: *Excitavit dissidia plurima, quæ progressa fusius aluit concertatione verborum.* Now, what is to be done in this Case, think ye, when the wily Heretick by *deceitful Words* is sapping the very Foundation, or subverting the fundamental Truths of the Gospel, ensnaring many an honest but unguarded Soul by such Devices? Must not the *Church* of Christ assemble, as it did in the Apostle's Days? And when assembled, are they not brought under a Necessity of *explaining*, and using such *Words*, as shall be judg'd most proper to shew the *Fallacy* of the *Deceiver*, and thereby to settle People's Minds in the Faith and Doctrine as contain'd in the Holy Scripture? When this is done, private Judgment ought no longer to disturb the Peace of the Church. But if Pride, Arrogance, Discontent, or an Affectation of Singularity (which were always the general Characteristicks of *Heresy*) have at any Time made such Disturbance; the *Church* has been ever justify'd in convening its Members, and explain-

ing

ing their Faith and Doctrines in such a *Manner*, as their Adversaries made it *necessary* for 'em to do. You see then where the *Fault* lay, whilst *Heresy* and *Schism* made such Havock in the *Christian* Church; and whenever the Objection is made to the *Orthodox*, in respect of *Councils*, *Creeds*, and *hard Words* (as they call 'em) it ought to be remember'd by way of Answer, that such *Councils*, *Creeds* and *hard Words* had never been, if *Self-Conceit*, *Pride*, and *Disappointment* had not first of all made the Disturbance, and oblig'd the Governors of the *Christian* Church to do what they did. I thank you for your Patience in hearing me out; and I hope, considering the *natural Application* made of *Marcellinus*'s Declaration in favour of the *Orthodox*, no Part of what I have said will be thought a *Digression*.

*B.* Sir, I am first to thank you, which I do very heartily, for having now fully consider'd our Saviour's *Prophecy* relating to *Jerusalem*; which you readily agree was not done, when we met last; and the *surprising Interposition* of Heaven in blasting the Designs of *Julian*, and being a Truth so well supported on all Sides, gives me very great Satisfaction. Happy, thrice happy were those Thousands you took notice of; *Jew* and *Gentile*, who were immediately *baptiz'd* upon this *wonderful Event*, and thereby had a *new Birth* given 'em, whilst Thousands on the other hand had been just before seeking their own *Death*, and found *it* in the most ghastly

Manner. The Cloſe of your Diſcourſe has ſurpriz'd me very much; for I little thought that *Marcellinus* wou'd have gone ſo far in your Favour, as to the Diſtinction he makes between the *Orthodox* and the *Arians*; tho' I think your *Hiſtorians* are pretty well agreed, that *none* in *Fact* have been greater Perſecutors than the *Arians* when in Power; and as to their *Principles*, beſides the Inconſiſtency of ſuch a *Spirit* with *that* of the Goſpel, their Notions of *Faith* and *Doctrine* muſt be very odd, and ill-grounded, when (as *Marcellinus* has remark'd, and you juſtly enforc'd) they take Refuge in ſuch an idle *verbal* Diſtinction to ſupport *'em*. *Adieu!*

*A.* Sir, I think we part too ſoon: Let me obſerve to you ſome other Things relating to *Julian*, which are as well atteſted as the former, and are as much to the Purpoſe in hand. *Julian* had many *Devices* for extirpating the *Chriſtian* Religion; but they all ſerv'd to make *more manifeſt* the Care of Heaven in preſerving that *Revelation* which had been made to Mankind by *Jeſus Chriſt*.

*B.* A few Words engage me to ſtay longer in this Place, and in ſuch Company: Pleaſe then, before you tell me of *Julian*'s *Tricks*, to give me a fair and juſt Character of him, as to his good or bad Qualities.

*A.* I think ſome of the *Fathers* of the Chriſtian Church, in this Particular, are to be blam'd; for they drew him in the moſt frightful Colours; and becauſe they had his Memory in the utmoſt Deteſtation,

Deteſtation, they forgot or rather refus'd to do him common Juſtice. He was certainly a Man that lov'd and encourag'd Learning and learned Men: 'Tis plain, 'twas his Delight from his Youth to the Day of his Death. He was regular in his Behaviour, ſober, chaſte, induſtrious, liberal and juſt; his Eloquence and Skill in the *Platonick* Philoſophy (which prevail'd at that Time) particularly diſtinguiſh'd him, and perhaps it may be truly ſaid, in that Reſpect he equall'd, if not exceeded his *Maſter*; or, as he us'd to call him, his dear Brother *Libanius*. He had a brisk lively Genius, free and eaſy, fertile and copious; the Learning he had acquir'd was polite and curious, his Stile ſmooth and pleaſant. This appears from his Writings yet extant; and no where more, than in his Satire upon the *Cæſars*, and his *Miſopogos*; which are generally look'd upon as his *Maſter-Pieces*. Beſides all this, it may be juſtly ſaid of *Julian*, that he was a Man intrepid; he had Courage, and was well vers'd too in the Art of War; of which he gave ſignal Proof in ſeveral Victories that he gain'd. But on the other hand it muſt be ſaid, and very truly, that perhaps there was not then in the World a more reſtleſs, vain, ſuperſtitious Perſon than this ſame *Julian*; ſuch was the odd Medley in the Compoſition of this *great wicked* Man! His Fondneſs or rather Madneſs for all ſorts of *Magick*; for *Augury* or *Soothſaying*; for caſting *Nativities*; for *Dreams*, and all ſorts of *Divinations*, was incredible; accordingly vaſt

Numbers of uſeleſs Perſons (in *Julian*'s Opinion) with which *Conſtantius* had fill'd his *Palace*, were totally diſcarded, and in their room were plac'd *Philoſophers*, *Diviners*, and *Quacks* of all Sorts: There were *two* Perſons that had a perfect Aſcendant over him, and ſeem'd to be his abſolute Governours, even in the Affairs of the Empire; which were *Maximus* and *Chryſanthus*. There was nothing ſcarce to be ſeen or heard any where, but *Altars*, *Sacrifices*, and pronouncing *this* or *that* to be a good or a bad *Omen*; *Julian* himſelf was not aſham'd ſometimes to carry the very *Wood* us'd in ſuch Sacrifices, and to help the old Women light and blow up the ſacred Fire; as *Gregory Nazianzen* juſtly reproaches him; add to this, that he would greedily pry into the *Entrails* of Beaſts, thinking to diſcover how Things wou'd fall out by ſo doing; and ſometimes his deteſtable Curioſity carried him ſo far, as *privately* to ſacrifice and pry into the *Bowels* of Men themſelves. His extravagant Fancies went ſtill farther; he was firmly perſwaded within himſelf, that the Soul of *Alexander the Great* animated his Body; induc'd thereunto by an Opinion (call'd *Metempſycoſis*) which with him was as certain and indubitable as any other in the World; and 'tis well known, this was what chiefly inclin'd him to enter into the *Perſian* War after the Example of *Alexander the Great*. I think it needleſs to ſay any more, touching the Character of this grand *Apoſtate*, who, as I obſerv'd to you ſome Time ago,

took

took on him the ſacred *Orders*, and for ſome Time officiated in the Church. But the ſtrange Paſſion he had for *Idolatry*, and for the moſt ridiculous *Superſtitions*, inſpir'd him at length with ſuch a Hatred of the *Chriſtian* Religion, that he *vow'd* its Deſtruction; and if you pleaſe to remember, I told you at the Beginning of this Conference, that when *Julian* came to be *ſole* Maſter of the Empire, he threw off the *Maſk*, as thinking the *Time* was come, when he need be no longer upon his Guard in Matters of Religion. But in truth, my good Friend, the *Time* was rather come, when thro' his Oppoſition the *Chriſtian* Religion was to ſhine out in greater Luſtre; and as the *Miracles*, on which the Chriſtian Religion is built, receiv'd a mighty Confirmation from the *Oppoſition* made by *Julian*, in attempting to *rebuild* the Temple; which has been fully diſcours'd of already; ſo the *Doctrine*, *Purity*, and *Holineſs* of the Chriſtian Religion, (if you are pleas'd to allow me Time,) ſhall appear to have receiv'd as ſtrong a Confirmation from the *Methods* and *Devices* us'd by *Julian* to eſtabliſh *another* Religion in room of the *Chriſtian*.

*B.* I ſhall think my Time very well ſpent, if you proceed and make appear, as you have propos'd.

*A.* I obſerve then, that *Julian* for the firſt *twenty* Years of his Life, made an open Profeſſion of the *Chriſtian* Religion; and, as I have ſaid already, he was actually a *Clergyman*; ſo

was

was his Brother *Gallus* too; and both of them read Prayers publickly for ſome Time, in the Church, as we learn from *Gregory Nazianzen* and *Sozomene*: Nay, *Julian* went ſo far as the *Tonſure*, and ſeem'd to be (in Appearance at leaſt) for leading a *Monaſtick* Life; thereby removing ſome Umbrage that his Couſin German *Conſtantius* had taken at his Conduct, and was judg'd to be the beſt Method for preſerving his Life, then thought to be in Danger.

*B.* Pray what need was there of ſo much Caution in *Julian*, conſidering what *Conſtantius* really was himſelf?

*A.* 'Tis true, *Conſtantius* was an *Arian*; but as great an *Arian* as he was, the *Empire* well knew, that he had dreadful Apprehenſions of *Idolatry*; and that he had had a Miſtruſt of *Julian* for ſome Time: He watch'd him narrowly for that Reaſon; and if News had been brought him that *Julian* had turn'd *Apoſtate*, he wou'd have cut him off infallibly: His Brother *Gallus* had met with the like Fate already, though not upon the Account of Religion.

*B.* There was an odd *Medley*, as you ſaid juſt now, in the Compoſition of this *Julian*; and one wou'd think it not eaſy to reconcile ſuch different Sentiments in one and the ſame Perſon. —— But pleaſe to proceed, Sir.

*A.* 'Tis true, at firſt Sight 'tis not eaſy to reconcile ſuch different Sentiments in one Perſon: But mind the Sequel, and you'll find this Matter unriddled plain enough. There were *two* grand

grand *Deſigns* which *Julian* had form'd to himſelf, as ſoon as he became ſole Maſter of the Empire; the Execution of which ſeem'd to have taken up his Thoughts the Remainder of his Days: The one was, to humble the *Perſian*, whoſe growing Power had for ſome Time been troubleſome to the *Romans*; the other was, to extirpate *Chriſtianity* Root and Branch, throughout the whole *Empire*. The better to ſucceed in this laſt *Deſign*, which he had moſt at heart, he concluded with himſelf, that quite another Method was to be taken for carrying on ſuch a *Perſecution*, than what had been taken by his Predeceſſors *Dioclesian*, *Decius*, *Maximinus*, *Nero*, and others.

*B.* Theſe Men did not want Cunning, nor Abilities, you know, for doing Miſchief that Way; what then made *Julian* take other Methods?

*A.* I dare ſay, you don't queſtion Cunning or Abilities in *Julian*; and a little Reflection will let you ſee the *Reaſons* upon which he concerted *new* Methods of Perſecution. He had gain'd a perfect Knowledge of the Principles and Practices of *Chriſtians*; had convers'd a long Time with 'em; more particularly with St. *Baſil*, and *Gregory Nazianzen*; and he had thoroughly conſider'd, and well weigh'd the Eſtabliſhment and Progreſs of *Chriſtianity* in the World, notwithſtanding former *Perſecutions*. Theſe Things put together, he not only found his *Predeceſſors* had judg'd wrong in Point of Policy,

Policy, by taking ſuch *Methods* as they did; but he found himſelf better qualify'd than *they*, by taking *new* Methods for accompliſhing the ſame *Ends*, as they had in View. *Julian*'s Philoſophy therefore inſtructed him, that he ought not to proceed with the *Chriſtians* by way of *Pains* and *Penalties*, and *wholſome Severities*, but rather with a Semblance of *Equity*, *Reaſon*, and *Moderation*? 'Twas upon theſe *Principles*, the fertile Genius of *Julian* form'd his *new* Scheme of Perſecution; which chiefly turn'd upon *two Stratagems*, the *blackeſt* and moſt *helliſh* in their Nature that cou'd be; and of which the World was not then appriz'd. The *firſt* was, by ſecret Practices and underhand Dealings, to bring the *Name* of *Chriſtians* into *Contempt*, as much as poſſibly he cou'd; ſometimes *they* were to be repreſented as a weak, ſilly Sort of People; and a Queſtion to be put, Whether they cou'd be cur'd, and yet retain the *Name*; ſometimes they were forbid reading *ancient* Authors; whilſt *Julian* told 'em, that it ſhou'd be deem'd ſufficient to read *Luke* and *Matthew* in their Churches; *who* alſo for the Time to come ſhou'd be call'd *Gallileans*; and as to their Loſs of *Places* and worldly Goods, *Julian* alledg'd in his own Defence, that he was putting 'em upon practiſing *literally* the Goſpel, and making the *Way* much eaſier for 'em to Heaven. The other *Stratagem*, as notable, and as big with Miſchief as the former, was, (the better to ſupport *Paganiſm*, which was declining a-pace) to introduce;

duce, without Loſs of Time, into that *Religion*, whatever was remarkably good and commendable in the *Chriſtian*; ſuch Parts of it, as he cou'd not help being affected with himſelf; and tho' *Gregory Nazianzen* in his Treatiſe againſt *Julian*, expoſes this Attempt of *Aping* the *Chriſtian*, as abſurd and impoſſible, yet the Matter appear'd otherwiſe to our *Apoſtate*; and he ſeems to have laid the greateſt Streſs upon this *Stratagem*, as the moſt likely to work his Ends; and therefore it ran very much in his Head, how he might graft upon *Heatheniſm* ſuch Branches of *Chriſtianity* as he ſhou'd think proper.

*B.* I am much of *Gregory Nazianzen*'s Opinion, that *Idol-Worſhip* and the *Chriſtian* cou'd not ſtand long together: It muſt be meer *Infatuation*, indeed, to think of aboliſhing that *Religion*, which was at the ſame Time to be made uſe of to ſupport *another*; and I can't deny, but ſuch a Procedure was giving freſh *Evidence* for the *Truth* of that *Religion* he was oppoſing. But pray let me hear how he went on with this wild Project.

*A.* There's a noted Saying, you know, that when Heaven is determin'd to puniſh, the Prelude often is *Infatuation*. *Julian* was minded to eſtabliſh amongſt the *Pagans* not only the *Order* and outward *Diſcipline* of the *Chriſtian* Church, but its Morals, Maxims, and Virtues, that *more* peculiarly adorn'd it. Among all the practical Parts, he labour'd moſt, that the *Heathens* ſhou'd copy after, or imitate the *Chriſtians*

in *Hospitality*; in the Care they took of burying their Dead; in *Charity*; in *Purity* of Manners, and in *Modesty*; which were *Graces* that distinguished the *Christian* from the rest of Mankind. *Julian*'s Letter to *Arsacius*, Sovereign Pontiff of *Galatia*, directing how he and his Priests shou'd behave in these Matters, is well worthy our reading: I should perhaps, be thought tedious, should I repeat the whole; which is here in my *Collection* of *Testimonies*: You may see it at your Leisure amongst *Julian*'s Works yet extant: You will likewise find *Part* of a second Letter to some other *Pontiff* (not nam'd) which equally deserves your Notice.

*B.* Did not *Julian*, the latter End of his Days, write a Book professedly against the *Divinity of Jesus Christ*? I think he did. I have heard some say, that the *Book* was never answer'd; and that the *Orthodox* Party industriously suppress'd as much as they could of it. Pray deal ingenuously with me, how stands that Affair? I fear, your *Cause* won't be much the *better*, in answering this Question?

*A.* A great deal *better*, I do assure you, before I have done with it: Nor should I have fail'd taking Notice of what you now propose, before we had parted. 'Tis very true, *Julian* (some say *Maximus* the Philosopher) did write such a Book, as you mention, full of Spite and Malice against the Person of *Christ*; and our present *Set* of *Deists* and *Libertines* are often out of Humour, because all the *Venom* of that Book has not

been

been tranſmitted to them; and they are apt to fancy ſometimes, that their *Cauſe* ſuffers very much for want of it: Now as to their charging this *Loſs* upon the *Orthodox* or *Catholick* Party, they may as well charge them with the *Loſs* of that great Number of Books which *Photius* has given an Account of in his *Bibliotheque*: We have there *Extracts* only, and are forc'd to ſit down contented with the Loſs of the Books themſelves: But there is leſs Reaſon to complain in regard to *Julian's* Book; for as the Book was fully anſwer'd by St. *Cyrill*, and is ſtill extant, ſo we ſee *Julian's* Arguments all the Way quoted; and 'tis unreaſonable after that, to ſuggeſt, that *Cyril* has not done Juſtice to *Julian* in ſuch Quotations, or that he has not conſider'd all the main Objections brought by him againſt the *Perſon* of *Chriſt*. The End and Deſign then of *Julian's* Book, as it appears, was to prove that our Saviour was a *meer* Man, like other Folks, inferiour in all Reſpects to the *Demi-Gods* and *Pagan Heroes*; and that *honeſt John* (as the *Apoſtate* had learnt to talk) was the firſt, that took it into his Head to give him the Name of *God*, &c. And yet this very *Book* (ſo it happens) furniſhes us, in a few Words, with very ſubſtantial *Evidence* for the Truth of our Religion: For *Julian*, at the ſame Time that he inveighs bitterly againſt the *Divinity* of Chriſt, dares not *deny* the Miracles of Chriſt, but, without any Examination, admits them to be true and real *Facts*; what he only labours at, is to leſſen the Idea conceived of

*them*, and to obviate, as to their Conſequences, by roundly aſſerting in a magiſterial Manner, that ſuch *Facts* were far exceeded by thoſe of their *Heroes* and *Pagan Gods*: And indeed, how could *Julian* undertake to prove the *Falſity* of ſuch *Miracles* of our Saviour, without giving the *Lye* at the ſame Time to *two Perſons*, whoſe Works he highly valued, and often copy'd after 'em? I mean *Celſus* and *Porphyry*; who, both of them, in the warmeſt and bittereſt Diſcourſes which they writ againſt *Jeſus Chriſt*, in the *ſecond* and *third* Centuries, always acknowledg'd ſuch a *ſuperior Power* to have been in Him, as would ſometimes *put the very Laws of Nature out of Order*, ſays *Celſus*;* and at other Times make even *the Gods themſelves give way to him*, ſays *Porphyry*. And there was Reaſon enough for *their* making ſuch Acknowledgments: For every Thing concurr'd for raiſing and fixing ſuch an *Idea* of *Chriſt* in People's Minds. His *wonderful Works* were freſh in a *traditionary* Way; There were publick Monuments; there was the *Letter* of *Tiberius*; and there were the *Archives*, or publick *Records* at *Rome*, which, as *Tertullian* aſſures us, atteſted theſe Things in the *ſecond* Century: Add to this the wonderful Rapidity, with which the *Chriſtian* Religion ſpread itſelf over the Earth; and the *Fame* of our Saviour's Diſciples working ſuch *Miracles*, as ſeem'd to exceed *thoſe* of their *Maſter*, agreeable to what is ſaid in the *Goſpel*: *Greater Things than theſe ſhall they do*. And thus, you

* Orig. Lib. 7. Contra *Celſum*.

you ſee, how much *Good* out of the *Evil* (intended by *Julian*) accru'd to the *Church* of Chriſt. *Julian*, in ſhort, *ran-riot*, as we ſay, in theſe Deſigns for ſubverting *Chriſtianity*; and one Hiſtorian* (amongſt others) whoſe *Time* of *living* enabled him to be Witneſs of the very *Fact*, aſſures us, that *Julian*'s Rage carried him ſo far as to deface and pull down a fine *Statue* of our bleſſed Saviour, that had ſtood above *three hundred* Years; and afterwards ſet up his *own* in the Room of it.

*B.* Such a remarkable *Fact* naturally leads me to ask you, how it ſtands recorded by that *Hiſtorian*?

*A.* This memorable *Statue* was erected at *Cæſarea Philippi* by the *Woman* that had received ſuch ſignal Mercies from the *Son* of God, when ſhe was cur'd of her *Bloody-Flux*. This *Statue* ſhe plac'd before the Gate of her own Houſe, and was minded in ſuch a *Manner* to tranſmit to Poſterity her *Gratitude* and her *Faith*: The Statue was of *Metal*; the Portraiture, it ſeems, natural and lively; a long *Mantle* thrown about him; and his Hand ſtretch'd forth to the *Woman* proſtrate and imploring his Aſſiſtance; and beneath, on the *Pedeſtal*, was a *Phenician* Inſcription, ſetting forth in a few Words the *miraculous* Cure; which Inſcription the *Chriſtians* had taken Care to brighten and clear up, when by the Length of Time it had been diſfigured.

*B.* Sir, my Affairs make the Time of parting now

* *Euſeb.* Eccl. Hiſt. Lib. vii. c. 18. Citatur hic Euſebii Locus in vii Synodo. Vide quæ narrat *Philoſtorgius*, Lib. vii. c. 3. & ex illo Nicephorus. *Vales* in Annot.

now neceſſary: I muſt leave the Country to-morrow; but ſhall return in a few Days, and will then ſoon pay my Reſpects to you again: But before I go, I muſt remind you of one Thing, that you juſt hinted in our *firſt Conference*,* and which I deſire may not be forgot, when we meet again; 'Tis concerning that merry Fellow *Lucian*, whoſe *Dialogues*, you ſaid, ſometimes ſerved to exhilerate and keep up the Spirits of our *Fraternity*: Perhaps in that you judge right; and I begin to think ſuch *Cordials* are deceitful: But what I mean, is this, that *Lucian*, you ſaid, *had unawares given a Teſtimony to one of the greateſt Myſteries of our Religion.* Let this be the *Topick*, if you pleaſe, to be firſt conſidered, when I next give myſelf the Pleaſure in waiting on you.

*A.* It is well remember'd; and I'll immediately mark it down in the *Collection* for that Purpoſe. Give me Leave, before we ſhake Hands, to offer a few Words, by way of Advice. You ſay, you are going out of the Country; it may be very improper, perhaps, for me to ask what *Company* may probably engage you; but if it be any of your *new Fraternity*, let me exhort you to be very cautious how you converſe with them, otherwiſe than your Affairs in Life may make it neceſſary ſo to do. I think, you have already ſeen, for the little Time we have ſpent together this laſt Month, juſt Reaſon to believe the *Goſpel* of *Chriſt*; for you have had *ſolid Evidence* given you, and more you may ſtill expect from me, for

* P. 22.

for the *Truth* of *Chriſtianity*; and the Arguments that have been us'd, ſeem to have made a happy Impreſſion on you: But remember, that it behoves every *Chriſtian*, though ever ſo well eſtabliſh'd upon juſt Grounds, in the *Faith* of the *Goſpel*, not raſhly to expoſe themſelves to *Temptation*; as you certainly do, if you mingle your ſelf at every Turn in a free Converſation with ſuch, whoſe *Principles* you know are directly oppoſite to your own. I make no Queſtion but that there are many in the World, who fancy themſelves ſettled in the *Principles* of their Religion; and yet, by frequently converſing with thoſe, whoſe Wit and Learning are for giving every Thing a Turn in favour of *Infidelity*, have ſometimes found their *Faith* ſhaken. You can't promiſe your ſelf, that a prophane Jeſt, ſome ſubtil Objection, ſome witty Burleſque on any Part of the *Bible*, ſhall not weaken your Belief, and make an unlucky Impreſſion on your Spirits, when perhaps you have not an *Anſwer* ready at hand to ward off the Force of theſe Things. But whenever the Providence of *God* plainly calls you into ſuch ſort of *Company*, as it may be often your Caſe; take care that no little *Cavils*, that may be rais'd againſt particular Paſſages in the *Bible*, intangle your Thoughts, or ſhake your Faith; rather recollect, and keep your Mind intent upon the plain Force of Argument drawn from *Miracles* and *Prophecies*, in the Manner it has been hitherto diſcours'd of between us; think often, how much ſafer you are in the

Profeſſion

Profeſſion and Practice of *Chriſtianity*, than if you ſhou'd relinquiſh the *Goſpel*, and change it for mere *Natural* Religion, which you ſeem'd ſome Time ago to be ſo fond of. You ſee that the *Doctrine* of *Chriſt* contains every Thing in *it* which *Natural Religion* pretends to diſcover: But your *Deiſts* deny thoſe very Parts of *Chriſtianity* which are neceſſary to ſupply the Defects of the *Light* of *Nature*. The Condition, indeed, of ſuch Men, is diſmal: The Charge is heavy, but very juſt, as a pious and learned Writer has lately drawn it up againſt 'em.* "They deny the "*Atonement* of Chriſt, and the *Pardon* of *Sin* "through the Virtue of ſuch *Atonement*; they "deny *Jeſus* to be the great *Prophet*, and the *Sa*"*viour* of Mankind: Whereas he himſelf has told "us by Commiſſion from the *Father*, *If ye believe* "*not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your Sins.*" What a Bleſſing, think ye, muſt ſuch Subjects be in a *Chriſtian* Country? And ſo, my good Friend, I take my Leave of you.

*B.* I heartily thank you for this good Advice and ſerious Application; and I hope, by the *divine* Aſſiſtance, to make a right Uſe of both. *Adieu.*

* See Dr. *Watts*'s Caveat againſt Infidelity.

BRITISH MUSEUM

FINIS.

# PREFACE.

HAVING publiſh'd, ſome Time ago, a ſmall Treatiſe in *three Conferences*, being the *Firſt* Part of an *Appeal to the Genuine Records of Heathen and Jewiſh Writers in Defence of the Chriſtian Religion*; I have ſince found it neceſſary to vindicate a very remarkable *Teſtimony* of the Heathen *Phlegon*, (there inſiſted on, relating to the miraculous *Eclipſe* at our Saviour's Paſſion) from the groundleſs Miſrepreſentations of *it*, in a late *Diſſertation* written by one Dr. *Arthur-Aſhley Sykes*; and likewiſe *defended* by him, with a ſurprizing Obſtina-

cy, in his Diſpute with Mr. *Whiſton* on the ſame Subject. That Gentleman has thought fit to oppoſe a *Teſtimony*, that has been *apply'd* in all Ages, for about *Sixteen* hundred Years together, in behalf of our *common Faith*: So that *Ancients* and *Moderns*, in this Reſpect, now both ſtand corrected of *Weakneſs* or *Knavery*; and the World is told at the ſame Time, That ſuch *Correction* is the proper Duty of a *Miniſter* of the *Goſpel*.

It is a melancholy Reflection, (and I ſpeak it with the deepeſt Concern,) that *Infidelity* is now known to *Appeal*, in its own Defence, to the *Sacred Order* itſelf; ſeen to rejoice in finding a Champion, who has committed ſuch an *Inſult* upon the whole Chriſtian World, and yet calling himſelf a *Friend* to *Chriſtianity*; labouring (though his *Labour* be in vain) to deprive Chriſtians of one of the moſt glo-

glorious *Teſtimonies* that the *Heathen* World at *this Day* can probably afford us. Will not the *Deiſt* and the *Libertine* be apt to ſay, That this *Divine* has herein outdone a *Celſus*, or a *Julian*? The *latter*, (who was firſt a *Clergyman*, and then an *Emperor*,) never durſt make *ſuch* an Oppoſition to *Phlegon*; becauſe *Phlegon* in thoſe Days (near *Fourteen* hundred Years ago) paſs'd every where for a good *Witneſs*; no Body queſtioning the *Evidence* that he gave for a *Præternatural Eclipſe*: And though the *former* was ſo far reduced, in point of Argument, that he could find no other *Name* in accounting for the many Wonders at Chriſt's Death, than *that* of Magick; yet he was not ſo hardy as to *controvert* this Teſtimony of *Phlegon*, when it was urg'd by *Origen*. It was *then* a ſure Weapon, which *Origen* knew his *Free-Thinker* could not fence againſt:

For

For it was well known, that *Phlegon's Evidence* deriv'd itſelf from the *Roman Archives*; which our Engliſh Adverſary, this *Friend to Chriſtianity*, had rather ſhould be call'd *Secret Accounts*. [See his *Diſſert.* p. 36. See the 4th *Conſ.* below, *p.* 98, *&c.*] The firſt Chriſtian Writers often *appeal'd* to theſe *publick* Records in this Matter; and ſometimes they judg'd it ſufficient to *appeal* to *Phlegon* only; he having had free Acceſs to *them*, by the Favour of his Royal Maſter *Adrian*, when he began to compoſe his *Olympiadique* Hiſtory. But the World is now told, without the leaſt Heſitation, that thoſe Primitive Writers, ſuch as *Juſtin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Lucian* the Martyr, and others, whilſt they were *thus* proving the Truth of Chriſtianity, or *appealing* to *Pilate's Acts*, (which were lodg'd in thoſe very *Archives*,) did either ſhew themſelves

to

to be *weak*, miſtaken, doating, old Men; or elſe (which this Gentleman would rather have believ'd) that they were *Inſincere*, in quoting ſome Things that were not *genuine*, [See Dr. *Grabe*'s Pref. to Biſhop *Bull*'s *Defenſio*, *&c.* in relation to ſome idle Stories about *Juſtin Martyr*,] to ſerve THEIR CAUSE, (as he calls it,) which was defending our *Common Chriſtianity*; as alſo, that ſome of them were too much addicted to PUT upon others, as his *Phraſe* is; nay, farther, (as he modeſtly expreſſes himſelf,) that thoſe ancient Chriſtian Writers of the Second and Third Centuries, *had got a ſcurvy Trick*, (he ſays,) *of Lying for* GOD'S *ſake*. [See his *Diſſert.* p. 39, 40. his *Def.* p. 21.]

I am very ſenſible, the following *Plea* for *Phlegon*, as alſo for thoſe other *ancient Writers*, will be thought by ſome to have too much *Warmth* in it: I will

I will only ſay, ſuch Readers may probably, and in *reality* be more angry at the *Argument*, than the *Zeal* in ſupporting this *Cauſe*; which our *Divine* owns, is a Cauſe of no *ſmall Importance*: And ſurely he himſelf ought to remember the Apoſtle's Direction, *viz.* That *Rebuke*, as well as *Zeal*, may ſometimes become *neceſſary*. But if neither he nor his Friends will allow of it in this Caſe; they will then be oblig'd to cenſure the Judgment and Conduct of the late Dr. *Samuel Clarke*, in a Caſe of the like Nature; who has diſcover'd an uncommon *Warmth*, has uſed ſevere Language, if not bitter Invective, whilſt arguing with our *Deiſts* and *Libertines* in his *Boyle*'s *Lectures*; — Thoſe very *Lectures*, that gave this *Friend to Chriſtianity* ſo much Pain, till he had got *Pilegon*'s and *Origen*'s Teſtimonies both

ſtruck

ſtruck out of *them*; as appears now to be *Fact*, in the late Edition of thoſe Lectures. If this ſhall not be thought *Apology* ſufficient for any *warm* Expreſſions upon this Occaſion, the Reader may find more ſaid upon the ſame Subject, in the *Fifth Conference*, [Conf. V. *Page* 13, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25.] to which he is now referr'd.

However, be the Conſtruction put upon the following Papers what it will, 'tis a frightful Scene, to ſee a *Divine* of the Church of *England pluming*, upon an imaginary Victory over the *diſintereſted Phlegon*, who has tranſmitted to Poſterity ſuch glorious Things concerning the *Son* of GOD, beſides this Account given of the *Eclipſe* at his Paſſion; To ſee this *Divine*, in his Writings, on the one hand, telling each *Libertine* and *Deiſt*,

That he has detected the ancient Christian Writers of much *Weakness* or a great deal of *Knavery*; and on the other hand, bidding every sincere, honest-hearted Christian believe, that in doing this, he has been *doing real Service to the Cause of Christ*; "removing (as he calls it,) an Oc-"casion of *Triumph* out of the Way "of OUR Adversaries." Let him not flatter himself; for a little Observation may convince him, that those Gentlemen, whom he miserably miscalls by the Name of HIS *Adversaries*, would not only have him proceed in controverting such Testimonies for *Reveal'd* Religion, but are pleas'd to find, that such a Method, such a sort of Opposition as this, is at last judg'd a proper Expedient for putting a Stop to their avow'd *Infidelity*.

The

# PREFACE.

The Reader is desir'd to indulge a *Second*. Hearing to the injur'd *Phlegon*; and 'tis hoped, his *Evidence*, as now given in by *Ancients* and *Moderns*, will, by this *Contraste*, appear in a stronger Light; and that those Renown'd *Fathers* of the Christian Church will also, in the following *Defence*, approve themselves to be (what they really are) Men of the strictest Piety, most extensive Knowledge, sound Judgment, and unquestionable Integrity; by which Means the Reader will be better able, not only to guess at the ill Designs of this *Anti-Phlegonist*, from his having aspers'd *them* in so vile a Manner; but to see this great Truth of *Phlegon*, concerning a *miraculous* Darkness, more effectually recommending itself to the World; and the highest Proof given, that no *false Arts* have

been made uſe of in the Vindication of it.

The *Fourth* Conference, in the following Treatiſe, which contains the *Firſt* Part of the *Defence* of *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony, was drawn up ſome Time laſt *Summer*; and then, upon ſecond Thoughts, it was laid aſide; imagining that Dr. *Sykes* would have been ſatisfy'd with what Mr. *Whiſton*, juſt at that Time, had publiſh'd, for ſhewing him his *Error*. But the Doctor having lately, by his *Defence*, let the World ſee, that his *Firſt Error* was to be obſtinately maintain'd by the Commiſſion of many *more*; it being likewiſe obſerv'd, that Mr. *Whiſton* had neglected to wipe off thoſe foul Aſperſions which the *other* had caſt upon *Juſtin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, &c. as alſo that Mr. *Whiſton* (at the Time of writing his Vindication of *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony)

mony,) appears to have known nothing of the *two Epocha's* in *Tiberius*'s Reign; which is the very *Key* for ſolving thoſe *Difficulties* which his Antagoniſt had rais'd about the *Time* of the Death of Chriſt, and concerning the *Application* of *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe: Upon theſe Conſiderations, I have taken the Liberty to *poſtpone*, for a little Time, what I had promis'd in a Preface to the *three* firſt *Conferences*, viz. a Confirmation of the *Genuineneſs* of the noted Text, (1 *John* v. 7.) *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven*, &c. from two valuable *MSS.* The one contains the judicious *Remarks* of the late learned Dr. *Cave* (Canon of *Windſor*) upon the *Teſtimony* of *Lucian*, or ſome other *Heathen* Writer, who appears to have been acquainted with *that* Text, at the Beginning of the *Second* Century. The *other* is the *Verona*

MS.

MS. of *Aur. Caſſiodore*, (who was for ſome Time *Prime* Miniſter to *Theodorick* the Great,) lately publiſh'd with great Exactneſs, by the Honourable *Scipio Maffei*, a Perſon well known to the learned World. In this *MS.* we have not only the expreſs Words of St. *John*, (1 *Ep.* v. 7.) recited by *Caſſiodore* in the *Complexiones*, (above *Twelve hundred* Years ago,) but we are aſſured by the ſame learned Author, in another Part of his Works, that the beſt and moſt *ancient* Greek Copies of the New Teſtament, (even in thoſe *early* Days,) as well as the moſt ancient Verſions, were carefully conſulted, and compar'd with each other; which makes *Caſſiodore*'s Teſtimony ſtill ſtronger: For thoſe *ancient* Authorities appeal'd to by *Caſſiodore* as SUCH, may fairly be ſuppos'd to riſe as high as the Time of the Heathen *Lucian* himſelf: So that theſe two MSS. ſeem luckily

luckily to conſpire in eſtabliſhing the *Genuineneſs* of this Text. [Id Monachis ſuis præcepit *Caſſiodorus*, ut *præſtantiſſimis*, & Græci *etiam Textûs collatione repurgatis Codicibus uterentur; utque, in* ambiguis Locis, *duorum vel trium* PRISCORUM, *emendatorumq; Codicum Auctoritas inquireretur.* Ipſum *Caſſiodorum* in primis idem præſtitiſſe, quis ambigat, inquit *Maffeius?*] I find one Mr. *Samuel Chandler* (a *Non-Conforming* Teacher, as I am inform'd) endeavouring to invalidate *Caſſiodore's* Teſtimony in this Matter; but there will be no great Difficulty in *removing his* Objections; for he is only, like another *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, doing an *imaginary* Piece of Service for our *Free-Thinkers*. After ſuch Removal, there will be a thorough Enquiry made into, and full Proof given of the great *Inſincerity* of ſome modern

dern Writers, in their Way of treating on this controverted Text. The *Third* Part will be ſeen in two *Conferences*, now ready for the Preſs. There will be ſubjoin'd a *Letter* ſent to the ſaid *Scipio Maffei* at *Verona*, upon the Subject of this *MS.* and his *Anſwer*, containing further Information about it, if timely receiv'd.

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CON-

# AN APPEAL TO THE Genuine Records.

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*A.* GOOD morrow, Sir: This early Hour makes the Visit more agreeable. You are welcome into the Country again. Please to walk up to the Room you have been so long a Stranger to.

*B.* 'Tis true, I have been *that* Stranger; but very unwillingly. Family Affairs must be minded: And *that* made it necessary. The Loss, certainly, is on my Side; and I often regretted it during my Absence. What a secret Pleasure does the very Sight of this Room give me! for I am now recollecting the *three* Days Conversation we had in it about a Year and a half ago. What you said the last Day, made very

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a very ſtrong Impreſſion: I very well remember, you obſerv'd to me as much, at parting. I have Reaſon to think, it will be ſome Satisfaction to you, when I ſay, that Time hath not worn it off; and, I hope, never will. I began to reflect, in the beſt Manner I could, upon what had paſſed between us; and in a little Time I ventured to engage (though perhaps *that* was not ſo prudently done) with the younger Sort of our *Free-Thinking* Gentry; I mean, that Society, which I was ſo lately a Member of. What made me think myſelf a Match for theſe Gentlemen, was *that* known *Indolence* I had been ſo long acquainted with myſelf, and a ſuperficial Sort of Learning, which they uſually content themſelves with. They are, in the general, a very complying ſort of Folks, if you don't trouble them with Arguments that interrupt a licentious Courſe of Life. They very often look no farther than what prevails *moſt* amongſt thoſe they converſe with. It was my own Caſe lately: And I am now every Day convinced, more and more, that 'tis this giddy Humour, which carries ſuch Numbers away into *Infidelity*.

*A.* I very well remember, when we laſt ſhook Hands, I thought it ſeaſonable to caution you againſt ſuch Adventures as theſe: But ſince you ſeem to have come off ſucceſsfully, and talk with ſo much Courage upon the Matter; (which, you may aſſure yourſelf, gives me the higheſt Satisfaction;) let me ask you, in what

Manner

Manner your *quondam* Fraternity treated you, when you let them ſee, by good Arguments, that you had juſt Reaſon to deſert them.

*B.* They took up their well-thumbed *Quarto* *, and immediately told me out of it, that I did not *uſe thoſe Faculties that God has given us to judge with, after the beſt Manner I was able* †; nor would they hearken to thoſe Conceſſions of Mr. *Lock* ‖, *viz.* that *He gratefully received and rejoiced in the Light of* Revelation, *which ſet him at reſt in many Things, the Manner whereof his poor Reaſon could by no Means make out.* They had the Aſſurance to inſinuate, if not ſay directly, that in ſuch a Way of *Thinking* as mine, I was neglecting my own Intereſt; that I was entirely out of the *Faſhion*; and that it would much better become me, and turn more to my Advantage, in putting myſelf into a *Dreſs* that was modiſh and genteel to appear in, than to hearken to ſuch *credulous* Folks, as they perceived I had been lately converſing with.

*A.* I'm glad you turned Mr. *Lock*'s Weapon upon your young Gentry. They would have been much better pleaſed, if you had entertained them with ſome juvenile Excurſions, and other *Foibles* of that great Man. The Biſhop of *London* has often quoted him in his *Paſtoral Letters*; and, that you may be better arm'd for the future, pray obſerve carefully



* *Chriſtianity as old as the Creation.*

† *p.* 3.

‖ *Vol.* I. *p.* 334, 573.

how his Lordſhip has *applied* the ſeveral Paſſages he has quoted. For my part, I think this *one golden Sentence*, that you urged, juſtly demands his *Buſto* in any *Royal Library*. But what ſad *Reaſoners* are this *quondam* Fraternity of yours? They *argue* from Numbers, from Faſhion, and from worldly Intereſt, without any regard to future Rewards and Puniſhments; and they would have you believe, that they are the People, who *uſe thoſe Faculties that God has given them to judge with, after the beſt Manner they are able.* As to *Credulity*, which their *Inſtructors* have taught them to object to you; I deſire, when you ſee them again, that you would bid them ask their *Maſters* for the ſeveral *Creeds* of *Hobbs*, *Spinoſa*, and Mr. *Toland*, (no doubt they can furniſh them; ſuch *Creeds* having been collected by ſeveral Writers;) and then to tell you, who are the moſt *credulous* ſort of People, according to the genuine and natural Import of the Word *Credulity*, or even, as they themſelves underſtand it, that is, when we *raſhly believe Things, without Reaſon for ſo doing.* It will be found (as a learned and judicious Writer * has lately told his Clergy) that ſuch *Creeds* contain more frightful Articles, than the *Trent Creed* itſelf, or even the *Mahometan*. There's ſcarce an *Article* amongſt them, ſays he, but what is big with many and ſhocking Abſurdities. You may tell ſuch Gentlemen

* Dr. *Waterland's* ſecond *Charge* to the Clergy of *Middleſex*, p. 22.

men then, (Tutors and Pupils both,) if you pleaſe, that they don't want *Faith*, where they have *Inclination*: Nay, nothing, ſays Mr. Archdeacon, is too *abſurd* for their Belief, when they have a Mind to it. And yet theſe are the People, that told you (it ſeems) the other Day, that you don't *uſe thoſe Faculties that God has given you to judge with, after the beſt Manner you are able.* There lies a Book on the Table, juſt before you, (which you may peruſe at your Leiſure,) written by one, who is allow'd to be a cloſe Reaſoner*, who, for ſeveral Pages together, lets us ſee the many intolerable *Abſurdities* that our preſent ſet of *Infidels* muſt admit of; obſerving withal, that "their ſo-"much-boaſted Averſion to all kind of *Bigo-*"*try* and *Credulity*, is mere Jeſt and Scene; "and that they are either ſome of the moſt "fondly *credulous* Perſons in the World, or "worſe; *credulous to a Prodigy*, and might as "well *go on* to the Fictions *of a Popiſh Legend*, "or a *Turkiſh Alcoran.*" Theſe *credulous* Perſons, I have obſerved of late, ſhew a *Diſlike*, when they are called *Free-Thinkers*; and yet it is a *Name* of their own coining. 'Tis not many Years ago, that they publiſhed a long *Liſt* themſelves, to ſhew how numerous they were. Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* is *modeſtly* put into their *Liſt*; he is diſtinguiſhed by them, in that Pamphlet, under the Name of a *Free-Thinker*; and in the Title Page they make their boaſt of a *growing*

* *Ditton* on the Reſurrection of Chriſt, *p.* 364. *&c.*

a *growing Sect*, which they there call *Free-Thinkers*. I am very ſure, they are *Free-Speakers*. I have heard them myſelf, whilſt quarrelling with the Name of *Free-Thinker*, *out of the Abundance of their Heart*, liken the *inſpired Writings* to *Perſian Tales*. The Land muſt mourn where ſuch Monſters are ſuffer'd: And they are now every Day multiplying as the Spawn of *Woolſton* and *T——l*. Hiſtory tells us, that the Dregs of *Arianiſm*, and the vileſt *Free-Thinking*, were the Things that deſtroy'd the Churches of *Aſia*; and introduced, in the Room of Chriſtianity (by the juſt Judgment of God) the Religion of that wretched Impoſter *Mahomet* *. I eaſily imagine, as you do, that the younger Sort of theſe *Free-Thinkers* know nothing of theſe monſtrous *Creeds* and *Abſurdities* ariſing from their own Doctrines; whilſt the old inveterate *Deiſts*, who know ſuch to be the neceſſary Conſequences of their own Poſitions, do as artfully avoid entring upon the Diſcuſſion of any ſuch Topicks.

*B.* I confeſs, I knew nothing myſelf of theſe *Creeds* and *Abſurdities* you talk of, when I fell into this Company; otherwiſe I ſhould have charged it home upon them; and I promiſe you, I'll take care to do it for the future. My Way of *anſwering* the Treatment I then met with, was reaſoning upon, and making Deductions from thoſe *Facts* and *Prophecies* that you had

* See Dr. *Prideaux*'s Life of *Mahomet*, and his Letter (ſubjoined) to a *Deiſt*.

had talked of ſo convincingly to me, in Defence of *Divine Revelation*. Theſe were the *Weapons* I made uſe of; and I am not without Hopes, that in a little Time they may prove ſucceſsful in the Converſion of thoſe unhappy Gentlemen.

*A.* You may be furniſhed with more *Weapons* of that ſort, whenever you pleaſe; and I remember, it was your *particular* Requeſt, when we laſt parted, that I would proceed (when we met again) in proving *Chriſtianity* from that merry *Heathen* Writer *Lucian*; who, as I told you, *had unawares given a Teſtimony to one of the greateſt Myſteries of our Religion* *. The *Myſtery* is that of the *Bleſſed Trinity*, contained in the Words of St. *John*, 1 Epiſ. v. 7. *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven*, &c. *Lucian*, who lived at the Beginning of the *ſecond* Century, was not only acquainted (we ſhall ſee) with this firſt Epiſtle, but he remarked upon this particular *Verſe*, that has given ſo much Diſturbance to our *Anti-Trinitarians*. I will firſt give you then the *Teſtimony* from one of *Lucian*'s Dialogues, (or whether *Lucian*'s, or a *Con-temporary* Heathen Writers, is not, in our Caſe, material,) and then obſerve the Analogy, by comparing *it* with the Text. In the next Place, I will produce *new Proof* for the *Genuineneſs* of this Text; as well from the judicious Remarks now in *MS.* of Dr. *Cave* (late Canon of *Windſor*) upon this Paſſage in *Lucian*, as from an

* *Part* I. *p.* 22, 126.

an old *MS.* lately brought to light, and publiſh'd with all the Marks of Fidelity and Exactneſs, written above *twelve hundred* Years ago; wherein this remarkable Text is read. This very *MS.* of that able Senator *Aur. Caſſiodore*, Dr. *Cave* takes notice of as *loſt*, in his *Hiſt. Liter.* The noble Editor at *Verona*, *Scipio Maffey*, has added his own excellent Annotations: So that the *Whole* is ſupported, you will find, with all the Authority that an obſtinate Heretick in this Matter can require. And when this is done, I will let you ſee the *notorious Inſincerity* of ſome Writers, (thoſe of the greateſt Note and Figure,) in the bold Attacks they have made upon this Text, which our Heathen *Lucian* bore Teſtimony to in thoſe early Days. And conſidering this *Text* is Part of an *Epiſtle*, that was never called in queſtion, in any Age, or by any Perſon whatever, I do the leſs wonder that our Enemies have taken ſo much Pains to prove this *Text ſpurious*, rather than thoſe of the like Nature in other *Parts* of the Bible: For here they know their Attacks are in vain; and therefore I hope you will excuſe me, if I dwell longer than ordinary upon this Subject, it being a Matter, as you will perceive, of no ſmall Conſequence: And the whole Diſcourſe (you ſee) naturally ariſes from the *Teſtimony* given by this *Heathen* Writer *Lucian*. When we have done with *him*, and applied the whole, in fully vindicating this *Text*, referred to by *Lucian*, from the many

Cavils

Cavils and Objections that have been raiſed againſt it, I am ready to produce more *Facts*, well atteſted by other *Heathen* Writers, for proving *Divine Revelation*. And I deſire you would always remember (upon this, or any other *Proof* that I ſhall offer, or have offered of this kind) what the ſame eminent *Prelate*, juſt mention'd, ſays in one of his *Paſtoral Letters*; "When "by the *Help* of our *Reaſon* Revelation becomes "*ſo* eſtabliſhed; no Suggeſtion, either againſt "the *Need* of ſuch *Revelation*, or againſt our "*Obligation* to receive it, ought to make any "Impreſſion upon us: For to ſuppoſe that God "makes a *Revelation* that is *needleſs*, is a di-"rect Impeachment of his Wiſdom; and to "affirm that we are not bound to attend to, "and receive it, when made, is no leſs an Im-"peachment of his Authority." You ſee the plain Connection been the *Facts* I *appeal* to, and what the Biſhop has obſerved. The *Facts*, if you pleaſe, you may call the *Premiſes*; and the Biſhop's Words are a natural *Inference* from them. The *Facts* that I have already *appealed* to, in our former Converſation, are what you will find to be true, upon the ſtricteſt Examination; nor will I, knowingly, appeal to any for the future, but what are ſupported by unqueſtionable Authority. There are *two Points* that I would have you often think on; they will be of great ſervice, in conducting you ſafely through many a troubleſome Diſpute that you may happen to be engaged in. They are but

 ſhort:

ſhort: However, I will venture to aſſure you, when by your own good Senſe, and acquired Learning, you ſhall have improved upon *them*, they will prove like a *Sheet-Anchor* to you, when you find yourſelf *preſſed* by any of your old *Fraternity*. They will ſave you the Pains of reading over many an excellent Treatiſe: And let Mr. *T--n--l*, and his Party go on, adding *Quarto* to *Quarto*, and write as long as they pleaſe; do but keep theſe *two* Points in view, and you will ſoon perceive that theſe Gentlemen only diſcover warm Inclinations, but *prove* nothing of what they boaſt of; and you will find what Dr. *Waterland* obſerves * to be very true; *Take but away their Rhetorications, and equivocal Expreſſions, their Miſrepreſentations and Miſreports, their Oſtentation and their Scurrilities, and their Cauſe will be left in a Manner deſtitute.* The *two Points* are theſe, and I cannot give you *them* in ſtronger Words than the late learned and judicious Dr. *Prideaux* has done at the Cloſe of his excellent Letter to the *Deiſts*; " Thus have I given you an Ac-
" count, ſays he, how all the *falſe Religions* in
" the *Heathen World* had their Original; and
" herein I have been the longer, for the ſake
" of *two Reflections*:"

Firſt, That the *Notion* of a *Mediator* between God and Man, was *that* which did run through all the *Religions* that ever were in the World, to the *Coming* of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and was the *fundamental*

* Second *Charge*.

*damental Principle*, which prevailed in every one of *them*, as to all the *Worſhip*, which was practiſed in them; which could no otherwiſe become ſo univerſal among Mankind, but by a *Tradition* as univerſally delivered unto them. And what can better account both for this *Tradition*, and alſo the *Univerſality* of it, than what is delivered unto us in *Scripture*, of our being deſcended from one common *Parent*; who, on his *Fall* from the Favour of God, having had this *Promiſe* of a *Mediator* made unto him, (through whom we might be again reconciled unto him,) *tranſmitted* it to all his Poſterity.

Secondly, That the *Miſtakes* and *Errors* about the Worſhip of God, and the Service we owe unto him, which Men are apt to run into, when left to the Conduct of their *own Light* only, are monſtrous and endleſs, and therefore evidently demonſtrate the *Neceſſity* of Divine *Revelations*. For if God does expect from us an Account of our Actions, (*which is a Doctrine our Deiſts and Free-Thinkers do not care to hearken to*,) it is neceſſary he ſhould give us a *Law* for the Rule of them; and if the *Law* of our *Reaſon* alone be *inſufficient* for this, we thence ſee the Neceſſity likewiſe of *another* to ſupply its *Defect*. That there is ſuch a *Defect*, appears undeniably from the continual Errors and endleſs Abſurdities which Mankind, when *left to themſelves*, have ever hitherto run into. So that in this depraved Condition, we muſt have a

*Revealed Religion*, as well as a *Natural*, or elſe we can have no certain Knowledge of the Will of God, or any of thoſe *Duties* of Worſhip and Service, which we are to perform towards him. But this is a ſort of *Digreſſion*, occaſion'd by the Treatment, you ſay, you met with from your old Acquaintance. You are come to Day to talk about *Facts*, as it was formerly agreed on between us; and this is the Method we did then agree, and are now entring upon, for proving the Truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*. *Facts* are ſtubborn Things; and *theſe* being ſo well ſupported, I am perſuaded that *Chriſtianity* (whatever ſome Perſons may think on it) *will ſtill gain Ground*, as it did formerly, *by ſuch ſort of Evidence*.

*B.* There is one *Fact* I muſt take the Liberty of reminding you of, (which was brought upon the *Tapis*, and took up moſt of our Time the firſt Day,) that has lately met with *Oppoſition*; and the Gentleman that makes *it*, *thinks*, *or pretends to think*, (as he ſays [p. 4.] of ſome other People,) that *it* is not to be ſupported with ſuch *unqueſtionable Authority*, or in the Manner you have ſtated it: It is the *Eclipſe* mentioned by the Heathen Writer *Phlegon*; which, indeed, I think, you fully proved, from the *Antients*, was the *ſame* with that preternatural *Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Paſſion. I find your Opponent is a *Clergyman* too, and (what is very amazing) he tells the World, that he is *doing a real Service to the Cauſe of Chriſt*, whilſt he

is

is ſetting aſide a *Teſtimony* (a glorious *Teſtimony* it is) which, according to your Account, has been all along firmly eſtabliſhed by the moſt authentick Writers. His talking of *doing Service to the Cauſe of Chriſt*, in this Affair, was very ſhocking, I own: And I want very much to be informed, how you and he are ſerving *that Cauſe* in ſuch a *different* Manner. His Pamphlet, though it raiſed ſome Scruples, and, I verily believe, he has miſapplied the *Fathers* in ſeveral Things, (in which Point I hope you will ſatisfy me,) yet gave me very little Pain, after having read it carefully over; for his main Objection, I perceive, is grounded upon an old, whimſical, exploded Hypotheſis of *Kepler*'s, who, not liking the *Fact*, was willing to get rid of it; as ſome People have been ſince, by *ſuppoſing*, that the *Eclipſe* mentioned by *Phlegon* was natural; that *Euſebius*, *Jerom*, and others, were miſtaken; that *Kepler* was in the right, and conſequently that it could have no Relation to *Chriſt*'s Paſſion. Mr. *Whiſton*, I think, has lately ſufficiently confuted this wild Notion of *Kepler*'s; and thereby has let the *Divine* ſee, not only his own Weakneſs, but the high *Improbability*, that ſuch a judicious Perſon as Dr. *Clarke*, ſhould be ſo eaſily perſuaded to give up *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony, upon the producing of *Kepler*'s Hypotheſis; *ſuppoſing it was produced to him.* 'Tis certain, this *Divine* ordered Matters ſo, that the *Doctor* was not to be *alive*; when yet it was highly proper he ſhould ſpeak for himſelf. I cannot help

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thinking, but that ſome better Reaſons may be aſſign'd for Dr. *Clarke*'s ſtriking out this *Teſtimony*; and that he and his Friend were both well agreed in *ſerving the Cauſe of Chriſt*, after one and the ſame Manner. I do not queſtion but you will give me your Thoughts upon the whole Affair; nay, you ſee, you are obliged to do it for your own ſake, as well as mine. But, in the firſt Place, I beg you would recapitulate, and give a ſummary Account of this *Fact* of *Phlegon*, as you gave it, and ſtated it to me in our *firſt* Day's Converſation.

*A.* I find, *Lucian* then muſt ſtand by a while, and give his Evidence another Time. You ſeem to have cut out work enough for an Hour, at leaſt: However, I agree, your Requeſt is reaſonable, and, perhaps, my Compliance may be neceſſary too, for your fuller Satisfaction about a *Fact* of ſuch Importance as *this is*; and therefore, I hope, we ſhall neither of us find our Time miſpent, though we put the Buſineſs of the Day a little out of Order. As to the Perſon you point out, as denying that the *Eclipſe* mentioned by *Phlegon* has any Relation to the *Darkneſs* that happened at our Saviour's Paſſion; I deſire you will, for the future, drop that Diſtinction of *a Divine*. I am perſuaded you wiſh well to the *Order* in general: But I remember, at the very Beginning of our *firſt* Day's Converſation, you talked very oddly of ſome of the *Clergy*, or rather, you heard it talked of at a Biſhop's *Viſitation*; and you ſaid,

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it gave you a *ſecret Pleaſure*. Pray, Sir, when you ſee any of the *Order* acting in that odd Manner, ſpare the *diſtinguiſhing* Character, (for it is ſacred,) leſt it be thought, you deſign *it* as a Reproach to the Order in general. Such a Character, and ſuch a *Conduct* in ſome of us, do raiſe, I fear, very ſhocking Ideas in People's Minds. And let this Gentleman think what he pleaſes, I believe he will be found, upon further Examination, to have been *weakening Chriſtianity*, by endeavouring to ſet aſide this *Teſtimony*; and therefore, if you pleaſe, let him paſs under the Name of *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, as often as you ſhall have Occaſion to name him. As to his *Intentions* or Deſign in contradicting ſuch a known glorious and avowed Teſtimony of *Phlegon*, I ſhall not now ſo much as gueſs at them: But after I have recapitulated in the Manner you deſire, and when the *Fact* ſhall have been thoroughly diſcuſſed again by us, I ſhall give you my Thoughts very freely, and make the beſt Conjectures I am able, how it came about that Dr. *Clarke*'s Eyes were ſo luckily opened by this Writer, when he was reviſing his *Boyle*'s Lectures; and that both of them ſhould ſo well agree in *doing Service to the Cauſe of Chriſt* this Way. The *Free-Thinker*, *Celſus*, had the *Front* to ſuppoſe the *Earthquake* and the *Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Crucifixion, to be *fictitious Wonders*, or the Effect of Conjuration. And *Julian*, though he did not queſtion a *new Star* riſing at our Saviour's Birth, yet he was

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for resolving it into *natural* Causes. *Infidelity* had taken such deep Root in those Persons, that they would not *have been perswaded, though one had rose from the Dead to convince them.* But what's this, you will say, to our *Anti-Phlegonist?* He does not question *that Darkness*, as *Celsus* did, nor yet the Star as *Julian*, 'tis true. But have not several of those Writers, that convey'd down to us this *Scripture Darkness*, for so many Ages past, convey'd likewise the same *Darkness* as expressly recorded in the *Roman Annals*? or have they not applied the Darkness so *recorded*, to our Saviour's Passion? Have not the same primitive Writers convey'd to us these *two Facts*, with equal Plainness and Integrity? And when some of them were so publick and confident in the *Appeal*, did the *Roman* World offer to confront them in that Particular, as this Gentleman has taken a Fancy to do? Did their Enemies talk to *them* about *natural Eclipses*? or were they told, that they were under a *Mistake*, in making such an *Application?* and that there was no such *wonderful* Darkness recorded in their *Annals*? I would fain know then, when the *Fathers* of the Christian Church, who have convey'd to us the *sacred Writings*, have also *appealed* to the *Roman Archives* for the Truth of this *Fact*, and boldly *applied* what is since called *Phlegon*'s Eclipse, as *relating* to our Saviour's Passion; and such *Fact* or Testimony shall now be called in question; I would fain know (I say) what great Difference there is,

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in reckoning one *Fact fictitious*, as *Celſus* does; or in reſolving the *other* into *natural* Cauſes, as *Julian* does; and in *denying this Fact*, in the Manner it is applied by thoſe primitive Fathers? I deſire you will call *Tertullian*, and hear what he ſays, as to this Matter. He lived in thoſe early Days; ſo early, that the very *original Letters* of the Apoſtles * were then read in their Churches. He was a great Maſter of Hiſtory, and was particularly verſed in the *Roman* Laws, as appears from this *Apology* I am turning to, as well as from the Character that is given him by *Euſebius*. In this Manner then *Tertullian* pleads. "In the ſame Moment that he (*Jeſus* "*Chriſt*) diſmiſſed Life, the Light departed "from the Sun, and the *World* was benighted "at Noon-Day; and thoſe Men who acknow- "ledged this *Eclipſe*, but were unacquainted "with the *Prophecies* that foretold *it* upon "Chriſt's Death, and finding it impoſſible to "be ſolved by the *Laws* of *Nature*, at laſt "roundly denied the *Fact*; and yet *this Won- "der of the World you have related, and the Re- "lation preſerved in your* Archives *to this Day.*" A late worthy and learned *Divine*, whoſe Tranſlation you ſee I make uſe of, remarks at the Bottom of the Page thus; "An Eclipſe of "the Sun at a *Full-Moon* (as this was) is by the "known Laws of Nature demonſtratively im- "poſſible; and *this* it was made it ſo much "taken Notice of by the *antient Aſtronomers*;



"by

* *Tertul.*, Præſcript. c. 36.

" by *Dionyſius* the Areopagite, *Apollophanes* " the Sophiſt, by *Phlegon* in his *Olympiads*, *&c.* " *Vid.* Paraphraſe of *Zephyrus*, and the Notes " of *Pamelius*, and eſpecially the Annotations " of *Grotius* upon *Mat.* xxvii. 45.

*B.* According to our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s Way of Arguing, theſe *Primitive Fathers*, and *Grotius*, *Huetius*, and twenty more of the modern Writers, have been doing *Diſſervice to the Cauſe of Chriſt*, whilſt they ſo appeared in behalf of this Teſtimony of *Phlegon*. This is a Piece of Prieſtcraft, it ſeems, that our *Free-Thinkers* have not been yet able to dive into: And who ſo proper, ſay they, to make the Diſcovery, as a *Prieſt* himſelf? He roundly aſſures them *, that *this* is one of thoſe *impertinent Teſtimonies*, *that does but* weaken *the Evidence that is offered for the Truth of Chriſtianity*. But what if the Caſe appears to be quite otherwiſe than he has ſtated it, (as I make no great doubt it will ſo appear before you and I part,) what an odd, frightful Figure muſt a *Divine* of the Church of *England* (pardon me) make in the World, after having laboured to deſtroy one of the moſt glorious Teſtimonies (as far as I can yet learn) that *profane Hiſtory* affords us for the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion? I now often think of the Words you uſed, when we were formerly upon this Subject, " That *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony was " ſuch a ſort of *Proof*, for the Truth of our " Religion, that whenever it has been urged, " *it*

* Page 5.

" *it* has carried ſo much Strength and Weight " along with *it*, and has appeared ſo very power- " ful and cogent, that neither *Porphyry*, nor *Ju-* " *lian*, nor any other of our Enemies, have been " able to make any *tolerable* Reply to it."

*A.* Had not the Works of *Thallus*, another *Heathen* Writer, been loſt, and of ſome other *Heathen* Commentators that *Euſebius* takes notice of, there would have been no room for thoſe little Quirks and Quibbles that this *Anti-Phlegoniſt* uſes, by way of Objection, about underſtanding the *Paſſage* in theſe Olympiads. What, if there be no mention made of the *Full Moon* in the *Paſſage*, as 'tis cited by *Euſebius*; yet 'tis confeſſedly ſo mention'd as cited by *Julius Africanus*, who is allow'd to have been a moſt accurate Hiſtorian; who flouriſh'd not above three or *fourſcore* Years after *Phlegon*, and yet above a *hundred* Years before *Euſebius*: And what is farther obſervable, *Africanus* was the Man, that had read *Thallus*'s Works too. Now, what ſays *Africanus*, as he is quoted by this *Writer* from *Syncellus*? " *Phlegon* tells us, ſays he, that in *Tiberius* " *Cæſar*'s Reign, at the Time of the *Full Moon* " there was a total Eclipſe of the Sun, from the " ſixth Hour to the ninth." I cannot imagine why *this Authority* from *Africanus* ſhould not have the Preference to *that* of *Euſebius*, or any other now extant, in ſtating the *true* Reading of this Paſſage in *Phlegon*. I know very well what Mr. *W. ſurmiſes* to the contrary in this Matter, about *Africanus*'s Fragment having been inter-

polated, and that the Words [*Full Moon* and the *ninth Hour*,] he fancies crept out of the Margin into the Text. I muſt confeſs, after having conſulted the various Lections in *Syncellus*, (whence I believe Mr. *W*'s Fancy took its Riſe,) I cannot by any Means ſee Ground enough to think *thoſe Words* interpolated, but rather *reſtor'd* to their proper Place, in thoſe Copies where they may have been wanting; nor is *Euſebius*'s omitting *thoſe Words* any Argument at all, as we ſhall ſee hereafter. I am very ſure, the great and learned *Huetius* (one that Mr. *W.* has paid a great Deference to in this very Vindication) had none of theſe *Suſpicions* about him, when he ſaid *, Africanus *interpreted* Phlegon's *Words in a very different Manner*, (*viz.* from *Origin*, in his Commentary,) *for* Phlegon (ſays *Africanus*) *relates*, *that in the Reign of* Tiberius *an Eclipſe of the Sun happened when it was* Full Moon. *Africanus* is talking of a *Full Moon* himſelf at the Time of our Saviour's Paſſion: He then ſays, *it is plain*, that *Phlegon* ſpeaks of that very Eclipſe at Chriſt's Paſſion †: But how would it have been *ſo plain*, if the Circumſtance of a *Full Moon* had not been mention'd by *Plegon?* But what ſays *Africanus* from the Works of *Thallus*, which he had ſeen, but now are loſt?. " There was a " moſt dreadful Darkneſs, ſays *Africanus*, *all* " *over the World*; the Rocks were rent by an " Earthquake, and many Places in *Judæa*, and " in

* *Huet.* Dem. Ev. Prop. III.

† Δῆλον ὡς τοῦτο ἦν.

" in *other Parts* of the Earth, were thrown " down. This Darkneſs *Thallus*, in the *third* " Book of his Hiſtory, calls an *Eclipſe* of the " Sun: Without Reaſon, as I think; for the " *Hebrews* celebrate the Paſſover on the XIV " Day of the Moon, *&c.*" The Difference then between *Africanus* and *Thallus* was, by what *Name* they ſhould call this wonderful Darkneſs; but 'tis eaſy to ſee by *Africanus*'s commenting on the Matter, that *Thallus* read and underſtood in general as he did: For if *Thallus* had talk'd of a *natural* Eclipſe, 'tis plain *Africanus* did not argue fairly. " How can it be thought to be " an *Eclipſe*, ſays he, when the Moon was almoſt " diametrically oppoſite to the Sun?" And yet we ſee *Africanus*, being at a Loſs to find out a better *Word* for this *Darkneſs*, ſoon corrects himſelf, and leaves off cenſuring *Thallus*. *But be it ſo*, ſays he; *let what has happen'd ſink deep into the Hearts of the People; and let this* univerſal *Prodigy be ſuppos'd an* Eclipſe of the Sun, *ſince in reſpect of our Sight 'twas all one.*——— From this ſhort Remark, you may farther diſcern a very trifling Argument that's made uſe of by this *Ani-Phlegoniſt* *, who gravely puts the following Queſtion, after having cited this Paſſage of *Africanus*; " How comes it to paſs, that " *Thallus* is cenſured for an *Abſurdity*, and yet " *Phlegon*, who was guilty of a much *greater* " *Abſurdity*, eſcapes uncenſured?" Surely, 'tis obvious to every Reader *how it comes to paſs*; for

* Page 14.

for would it not have been very abſurd in *Africanus* to have *cenſured Phlegon* for uſing a *Word*, when he had been juſt before (upon ſecond Thoughts) reconciled to *it* himſelf? *But be it ſo*, ſays he---*&c.* and then proceeds to talk of *Phlegon*. But what's this *greater Abſurdity? Thallus*, no doubt, talk'd of a *Full Moon*; *Phlegon* talks of a *Full Moon*; and ſo does *Africanus*; and yet this Gentleman wonders, why *Africanus* don't *cenſure Phlegon* for ſuch *abſurd* Diſcourſe. I'll juſt take notice, that this Writer ſtops a little too ſoon upon this Quotation from *Africanus:* Mr. *W.* will *lengthen it* for him by-and-by; and then it will appear from *Africanus*'s Supputation of *Daniel*'s LXX Weeks, that he did not fix the Death of Chriſt in that Manner, which this Gentleman * ſays he did: But this is the Way our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* takes of *eluding* the Force of what *Africanus* ſays; tho' he ſo poſitively *applies Phlegon*'s Eclipſe to our Saviour's Paſſion.

*B.* Your Diſcourſe pleaſes me very well; yet ſuffer me to tell you, that in my Opinion you are *anticipating* Matters, and not proceeding according to the Method you juſt now propoſed. Pleaſe to give me a ſummary Account firſt, of what formerly paſſed between us concerning this *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon*; and then enter into as cloſe a Diſcuſſion, as you pleaſe, of what this Writer has ſaid in Oppoſition to *it*.

*A.* You may remember, I took Notice, that *Phlegon* was a great Favourite of the Emperor

* Pag. 17, 18, 96.

*Adrian*;

*Adrian*; and consequently we might reasonably conclude, that, in Writing his *Olympiads*, he had free Access to the *Roman Records*; and that there was no Transaction transmitted from the several Provinces of that Empire, he was any ways a Stranger to; which shews the inestimable Loss that the Christian World sustains, in being deprived of that History, and now forced to content ourselves with two or three broken Fragments only. *Ger. Vossius* expresses a hearty Concern for the Loss of it: "I wish, "says he, the *whole* Chronicle or Olympiad of "*Phlegon* was extant; for *that*, no doubt, "would have given us great Light into the Af-"fairs of the Primitive Church *." You may remember, when I cited *Thallus*, another Heathen Writer, to give Evidence (as far as others had quoted him) concerning the *wonderful Darkness* at our Saviour's Crucifixion; I took notice that he liv'd even in the *first* Century; which makes the *Loss* of his Works still more to be *lamented*: But I don't find the least *Concern* in this *Anti-Phlegonist* about that Matter; and the *little* that remains of *Thallus*, he would have to pass for nothing. I observ'd farther from *Thallus*, by comparing the several Authors that had quoted him, that this *miraculous Darkness*, according to him, was in the *eighteenth* Year of *Tiberius*: And is it any ways probable, that the celebrated

* Utinam totum chronicon exstaret: multum enim lucis absq; dubio, priscæ inde Ecclesiæ temporibus accederet. *Ger. Voss.* de Hist. Gr. p. 219.

celebrated *Africanus*, ſo early a Writer, and allowed to be an exact Chronographer in other Things, ſhould be ſo *groſſly* miſtaken, as to fix our Saviour's Paſſion in a *real* different Year of *Tiberius*, as this Writer has * charg'd it; and who *modeſtly* charges *Euſebius* and *Jerom* both with an *Abſurdity* likewiſe on this Account? " 'Tis " *abſurd*, he ſays, for them to quote *Phlegon's* " Teſtimony for the Death of Chriſt, when the " Difference betwixt *them* and *Africanus* was " plainly *three* or four Years." But this Matter ſhall be further examined in a proper Place; for this Writer ſeems to *amuſe* his Reader with ſome *Quotations*; and yet it will be found, upon farther Enquiry, (in what I have to offer to you,) that there was no ſuch *real* Difference (in point of *Time*) between *Africanus* and *Euſebius*, as this Gentleman would have his *Engliſh* Reader to believe. To proceed, I did not only give you *Phlegon's* Fragment in the *Manner* 'tis recorded by *Euſebius*; (which you obſerve is not ſo *full* as *that* given by *Africanus*,) but, if you pleaſe to recollect, I alſo laid before you *Meurſius's* Obſervations upon that Fragment: I referr'd you, for a fuller Information in that Matter, to the IX Vol. of *Gronovius's Greek* Antiquities; and I dare ſay, you have found nothing in thoſe *Obſervations* of *Meurſius*, that do in the leaſt *favour* the odd Notions now maintain'd by our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*. I well remember, I gave you another Fragment of *Phlegon's*; and, in my Opinion,

* Pag. 17, 18.

nion, a very material one; for which I refer'd you to *Lactantius* and to *Origen*; from whom we learn, " that *Phlegon* aſcrib'd to Chriſt a " *Foreknowledge* of the *Times* to come; and af- " firm'd, that there had been an exact Accom- " pliſhment of all his *Predictions*." Whence had *Phlegon* the Account of ſuch an *exact Accompliſhment*, but from the *Roman Archives*? which was a Treaſure that no Perſon was better acquainted with, we may well preſume, than himſelf. Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſhews a good Will for *explaining* away *Pilate*'s Accounts lodg'd in theſe *Roman Archives*, if he could. " *'Tis poſ-* " *ſible*, ſays he *, that *Pilate* might give an Ac- " count to *Tiberius* of the Death of Chriſt: But " that he wrote the Things which *Tertullian* " ſays he wrote; or that the Things, for which " *Juſtin Martyr* appeals to the *Acts* of *Pilate*, " were ever ſent to *Tiberius*, has no Foundation " of Probability." Theſe two *Fathers*, if I miſtake not, gall our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* in more Reſpects than one, and therefore I don't wonder to ſee the παλαιαμὸς breaking out in this manner. He has been pretty remarkable already in *explaining Prophecies*: But *that* I have nothing to ſay to at preſent. As to his Notion about *Pilate*'s Accounts ſent to *Rome*, and his intolerable Treatment both of *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, I promiſe you, that, as they are Matters of Importance, they ſhall be fully taken notice of before we part with him. You'll ex-

 cuſe

* Page 37.

cuſe theſe ſhort Digreſſions.---I now farther remind you, of what I ſaid concerning *Lucian* the *Martyr*'s appealing to the *Roman Annals* juſt before he ſuffer'd; "If you will not have any "Regard (ſays he) to the *Teſtimony* I have given "you for the *Divinity* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, you have "nothing left but to conſult your own *Annals*; "there you will find, that during *Pilate*'s Go-"vernment, and *at the Time* when the Saviour "of the World was crucify'd, the *Sun diſap-"pear'd*, and the *Univerſe* was buried, as it were, "in Darkneſs." I obſerv'd to you the frantick Humour of *Bodin*, who was a down-right *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, and ventur'd to impoſe upon the World in the moſt groſs malicious Manner, fixing this Eclipſe of *Phlegon*'s about *two and thirty* Years after the Time fix'd for the Death of Chriſt. But then I took notice withal, if you remember, that this Man had very *ill Ends* to ſerve, not only in changing the Text of *Phlegon*, but in queſtioning the *two* firſt Chapters of St. *Luke*'s Goſpel, becauſe the *Divinity* of *Jeſus Chriſt* there diſplays itſelf in ſo full a Light. I farther obſerv'd to you, that this *miraculous Darkneſs*, attending our Saviour's Paſſion, appears to have been *recorded* by the *Chineſe* as a *ſupernatural* Eclipſe of the Sun: For this I quoted the Learned Biſhop *Huetius*; and not being Maſter of *Hadr. Greſlon*'s Hiſtory of *China myſelf*, nor then knowing where to procure it, I contented myſelf with the Account given of that Matter by the learned Librarian at *Lyons*, (yet living,

living, as I'm inform'd,) *Dominique de Colonia*, who I hope will excuſe the Freedom I have ſometimes taken, in making the beſt Uſe I could of his excellent Work. You eaſily recollect, that I inſiſted pretty much upon *Tertullian*'s Appeal to the *Roman Records* concerning this *wonderful Darkneſs*, which muſt be the ſame with what *Phlegon* ſpeaks of. Can we think *Tertullian* was a Stranger to *Phlegon*'s Olympiads? tho' he appeals to the *Archives* themſelves; for it was proper for him ſo to do: But what ſignify'd his *appealing* any where about an Eclipſe that was only *natural*? Nay, his very *appealing* to an Eclipſe in the XVIIIth Year of *Tiberius*'s Reign, (as we ſhall find *that* to be the Caſe,) neceſſarily implies, that what was recorded in the *Roman Annals* of that Nature, *muſt be recorded as* SUPERNATURAL; becauſe by the unanimous Agreement of all *Aſtronomers*, whether *Greek* or *Roman*, there neither was, nor could be a *natural* Eclipſe in *that Year* of *Tiberius*; which Year correſponds with the Year wherein Chriſt died: So that tho' *Tertullian* and others do not name *Phlegon*, yet they meant *him* and *Thallus* too, (ſays *Scaliger* *,) and they *name* the *Records* whence *Phlegon* took the Paſſage; and therefore the *Fathers* did, in effect, lay a Streſs upon the Words of *Phlegon* himſelf. I am now to ſuppoſe, you have thought me long enough in the Recapitulation you deſir'd. In



* *Scal.* Animadv. in *Euſeb.* Chron. p. 171.

making this Collection of *Authorities*, I ſhould have told you before, that I was chiefly beholden to *Huetius*, *Grotius*, *Spencer* in his Notes upon *Origen*, and *Dom. de Colonia* already nam'd. Theſe *Authorities* are ſince put in order, with the Addition of many more (which I did not then think neceſſary) in Mr. *Whiſton's* Vindication againſt our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*; ſo that every *Engliſh* Reader may form a pretty good Judgment of the Matter now before us.

*B.* Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* having named *Grotius* in the firſt Page of his Pamphlet, (I think he ſhould have named *Huetius* too,) as a Perſon, whoſe *Reaſons* in this Matter were not ſo weighty as his *own*, in the Judgment of Dr. *Clarke*; I ſhould be glad to know, before you take that Pamphlet in Pieces, what it is that *Grotius* ſays upon the Affair. This will be doing Juſtice, I think, to the *Anti-Phlegoniſt* himſelf; for we ſhall then ſee at one View how far *his Reaſons* præponderate to thoſe of *Grotius*, and whether the Scale turn'd low enough to influence a Man of Dr. *Clarke's* Sagacity and Learning.

*A.* I object to nothing that has any Tendency to the ſetting this Affair in its true Light. *Grotius* then, upon theſe Words of St. *Matthew*, (*ch.* xxvii. 45.) has the following Remarks; "The Sun was darkned, ſays he, (as St. *Luke* "informs us,) not by the Interpoſition of the "*Moon*: for it was then *Full Moon*, but in ſome "manner *unknown* to us; and whereas St. *Mat-*"*thew* here ſays, *there was Darkneſs over all*

"*the*

" *the Land*; or (as St. *Luke*,) *over the whole*
" *Earth*; this, as it cannot be underſtood of the
" whole Globe, (for in many Parts of it there
" was no *Day*,) ſo neither would I have it un-
" derſtood of *Judæa only*, ſince the old *Aſtro-*
" *logers* and *Chronographers*, who take notice of
" *it*, make no Reſtriction, as to the Place; and
" therefore there's Room to underſtand *it* as
" *extenſively* as may be. *Phlegon* ſays, in the
" XIIIth Book of his *Olympiads*, That in *the*
" *fourth Year of the* CCIId *Olympiad*, *there was*
" *an Eclipſe*, *or Failure of Light in the Sun*,
" greater *than ever was known before*; *and there*
" *was Night at the ſixth Hour of the Day*, *inſo-*
" *much that the Stars appear'd in the Firma-*
" *ment*; *there was alſo a great Earthquake in*
" BYTHYNIA, *that overthrew great Part of the*
" *City* Nice. *Phlegon* aſſigns a *Place* for the
" Earthquake; but *none* for the *Darkneſs*: And
" ſince he takes notice of the *Darkneſs* being
" *greater* than any that had been ſeen before, 'tis
" a ſufficient Proof, that *it* was not ſeen *only* in
" *Judæa*. *Euſebius* quotes another *Greek* Wri-
" ter, (but does not name him,) writing thus
" concerning this very Affair; *The Sun fail'd in*
" *its Light*; *the Land of* Bythynia *was ſhaken*;
" *great Part of* Nice *fell down*. This Writer,
" not nam'd by *Euſebius*, without doubt, is
" *Thallus*, who is quoted by *Africanus* in the
" following manner; Thallus *calls this Dark-*
" *neſs an Eclipſe*, *in the third Book of his Hiſtory*;
" *in my Opinion*, *improperly ſo called*: *For the*
" Hebrews

" Hebrews *keep their Paſſover when the Moon*
" *is fourteen Days old; but the Things concern-*
" *ing our Saviour happen'd before the firſt Day*
" *of the Paſſover*, &c. In which Paſſage *Afri-*
" *canus* takes *Thallus*'s Expreſſion of an *Eclipſe*
" in a *ſtrict* limited Senſe, as if *Thallus* meant,
" that this Failing of Light in the Sun was in
" the *natural* Way, or from a *natural* Cauſe;
" whereas the Sun may be ſaid to *fail*, (ἐκλείπειν)
" tho' it does ſo any *other* Way whatever:
" This was the Reaſon likewiſe that *Origen*
" complains of the *Text* in St. *Luke*, as having
" been *corrupted*, becauſe of the Word ἐκλείπον-
" τος occurring in *it*; *(the ſame* Word *that*
" Thallus *and* Phlegon *had uſed for an Eclipſe.)*
" For *Origen* thought as *Africanus* did, that it
" was not a *proper Word* to expreſs the Senſe of
" the Evangeliſt." Moreover, *Tertullian* in his *Apologetick* thus; " *At length, being faſten'd to*
" *the Croſs, and having cry'd out and commend-*
" *ed his Spirit into the Hands of his Father, he*
" *gave up the Ghoſt of his own Accord, and ſo*
" *prevented the Executioner's breaking his Bones,*
" *by dying in his own Time, and fulfilled a Pro-*
" *phecy by ſo doing. Moreover, in the ſame Mo-*
" *ment that He (Chriſt) diſmiſſed Life, the Light*
" *departed from the Sun, and the World was be-*
" *nighted at Noon-Day; and thoſe Men who ac-*
" *knowledg'd this Eclipſe, but were unacquainted*
" *with the Prophecies that foretold it upon Chriſt's*
" *Death, and finding it impoſſible to be ſolv'd by*
" *the Laws of Nature, at laſt roundly deny'd the*

" *Fact:*

" *Fact: And yet this Wonder of the World you*
" *have related, and the Relation preſerved in*
" *your* ARCHIVES *to this Day.* In which Paſ-
" ſage, I don't apprehend, what elſe can be meant
" by *Archives*, than the *Place* where the pub-
" lick Tranſactions of the *Roman Empire* were
" recorded. 'Tis to theſe *Archives*, if I miſtake
" not, that *Lucian* the Martyr (in *Euſebius*) *ap-*
" *peals* to likewiſe; and whereas *Tertullian* ſtiles
" this *Darkneſs* the *Wonder* of the WORLD,
" he ſufficiently guards againſt the *Opinion* of
" thoſe, who aſcribe ſuch *Darkneſs* to *Judæa*
" only. I think therefore, that theſe Expreſ-
" ſions of St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, *over all the*
" *Land*, and *over the whole Earth or World**,
" are to be underſtood in relation to the *Ro-*
" *man* Empire, or certainly to the greateſt Part
" of it. What the Almighty was minded to
" have *underſtood* by this *Darkneſs*, has been
" differently argu'd by many. For my own
" Part, I'm of an Opinion, that *other Nations*
" were concern'd in this *Prodigy*, as well as the
" *Jews*, whoſe calamitous State the Prophets
" deſcribe by the *Darkneſs of the Sun.* For
" 'twas *this*, among other things, that put the
" *Centurion* into ſo great a Conſternation: And
" therefore the Meaning and Intent of this *Dark-*
" *neſs*, is to be taken in as large and compre-
" henſive a Senſe as poſſible. It was uſual with
" the Heathen Part of the World, *(as by ſeveral*
" *Inſtances,)* to obſerve ſuch *Prodigies* as cer-
" tain

* πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην.

" tain Indications, that Heaven was offended at " ſome heinous Sin or other that had been com- " mitted amongſt 'em. And, as to the *Jews*, " this *Prodigy* might in a particular manner " bring to their Mind thoſe Words of the Pro- " phet *Amos*, (viii. 9, 10.) *And it ſhall come to* " *paſs in that Day, ſaith the Lord God, that I* " *will cauſe the Sun to go down at Noon, and I* " *will darken the Earth in the clear Day*, &c. " For what was before of old fulfill'd in a meta- " phorical or *figurative* Senſe, was now made " good in a literal and *proper* Senſe, as I have of- " ten taken notice." Thus far from *Grotius*; and I hope you have not thought me tedious.

*B.* Sir, I thank you. This Comment of *Grotius*, I am apt to think, will not be ſo ſoon out of faſhion, as ſome People would have it. I have got our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s Pamphlet here in my Pocket. I cannot but wonder at the *magiſterial* Manner, in which he ſets out, when he tells the World, that *this Paſſage of* Phlegon OUGHT NOT *to be cited, as relating to the Darkneſs at our Saviour's Paſſion*; and yet two or three Pages farther, he ſeems to think himſelf in an *Error* too: " However, ſays he, whe- " ther I am miſtaken in my Sentiments, or in " any Remarks I have made upon *this Paſ-* " *ſage*, or not, I have here collected, *&c.*" Sir, after hearing this Account from ſo great a Man as *Grotius*, I even bluſh for this Writer; when, in the very *firſt Page* he aſſures his Reader, " That the *Reaſons* which he gave to Dr. " *Clarke*,

" *Clarke*, were such, as made him strike out " *this Passage* in his *Boyle's* Lectures." I think, some little Time ago, you mentioned *Huetius*, as a Person you was partly indebted to, for your *Collection* of *Authorities* in this Case. If it might not be too much Trouble, I should be glad to hear, how he *reasons* too upon the Matter. This would be still doing Justice to the Cause; and also our *Anti-Phlegonist* can have no Occasion to complain; because he has discarded *Moderns* as well as *Antients*, in this Affair, except *two* or *three*, that I hope you will give me a satisfactory Account of by-and-by.

*A.* Sir, The Gentleman you now call upon, stands very near you. Since you please to hear him *, let me tell you, he treats of this Subject *professedly*, and not as a Commentator; which makes me think, after you have heard him, that there may be some *Choler* in you, mix'd with the *Blushes* you just now mentioned. *Huetius* then was a Bishop in *France*, and one of the most polite, learned, and judicious Persons, which that Nation perhaps can boast of for these hundred Years past. He writ a *Commentary*, like *Julius Cæsar*, *de Rebus suis*, in *Latin*: He was a *Valetudinarian*, you may easily imagine from the laborious Works, with which he has obliged the learned World; often troubled with the Cholick; and at last found a Cure; and should you ever be troubled with a *Bilious Cholick*, let me direct you

F to

* Vid. *Huet.* Dem. Ev. Prop. 3.

to the reading that Book, where you will ſee your own Diſtemper deſcribed, a Remedy happily applied, and an excellent *Poem*, by way of Gratitude, in Praiſe of the *Tea-Kettle*. Excuſe the Digreſſion. *Huetius* expreſſes himſelf thus, upon the preſent Subject: " *Phlegon*, a Freed-" Man of the Emperor *Hadrian*, has declared " in his Chronicle or Olympiads, that *Jeſus* " was a Prophet, and that Things *future* were " known and foretold by him. The *wonder-*" *ful Things* done by him are confeſſed by the " *Jewiſh Chiefs*, as well as the *Talmudiſts*; nor " have the bittereſt Enemies of Chriſtianity de-" nied them, ſuch as *Celſus* and *Julian*. The " former, when he was not able to deny the " *Facts*, aſſigned a *fictious* Cauſe, Enchant-" ments and Witchcraft; the latter likewiſe " does not queſtion the *Facts*, but endeavours, " by declaiming, to leſſen the Eſteem of them " in People's Minds. *Porphyrie* alſo com-" plains, that *Jeſus* had reſtrained the Power " of the *Dæmons*; nor was it to be wonder'd at, " he ſaid, that whole Cities were laid waſte " by the *Plague*, where *Æſculapius* and other " Gods did no longer reſide; and that the " *Gods* were generally become of little Ser-" vice to Mankind, ſince *Jeſus* was made the " Object of their Worſhip. As to the *won-*" *derful Eclipſe*, and great *Earthquake* that hap-" pened at *Chriſt*'s Death, they are both taken " notice of by *Phlegon*, juſt now quoted, in " in the thirteenth Book of his *Olympiads*; St.

" *Jerom*

" *Jerom* thus tranſlates the Paſſage; *In the*
" *fourth Year of the* 202d *Olympiad* (which an-
" ſwers to the 18th of *Tiberius*, when *Chriſt*
" died) *there was a great Eclipſe of the Sun*, ex-
" *ceeding all Eclipſes that had ever happened*
" *before it: The Day at the ſixth Hour was*
" *turned into ſo dark a Night, that the Stars*
" *were ſeen in the Firmament; and the Earth-*
" *quake in* Bithynia *threw down many Houſes*
" *in the City of Nice.* The ſame Account, *Eu-*
" *ſebius* lets us know in his *Chronicle*, was given
" by other *Heathen Writers* in their Commen-
" taries. Among ſuch Writers, the Authority
" of *Thallus* is chiefly remarkable, who, as
" *Africanus* (an eminent Chronographer) has
" quoted him, relates the very ſame Eclipſe
" in the third Book of his Hiſtory. That it
" is the *ſame Eclipſe* or *Darkneſs*, that is men-
" tioned by the Evangeliſts, with what is here
" taken notice of by *Phlegon*, in his Hiſtory,
" appears chiefly on theſe *three* Accounts;
" 1. The Eclipſe fell out, as by both Hiſto-
" ries, in the *ſame* Year, namely, in the 18th
" of *Tiberius*. 2. It happened at the *ſame*
" Time, namely, at the *ſixth Hour*. 3. It had
" the *ſame* Circumſtance attending it, a
" remarkable *Earthquake*, which made the
" Wonder ſtill greater in both. *Tertullian*
" therefore, when he was pleading with *Hea-*
" *thens*, in behalf of the Chriſtians, had juſt
" *Reaſon* for *appealing* to their *publick Records*,
" to make good the Truth of this *miraculous*

" Event. Before this, *Lucian*, the Martyr at
" *Antioch*, appealed to the ſame *Archives* or
" *Roman Records* at *Nicomedia*, before the
" Governor, beſpeaking him thus: *Conſult your*
" *Annals; you will find in the Days of* Pilate,
" *when* Chriſt *ſuffered, that at Noon-Day the*
" *Sun vaniſhed, and the natural Courſe of Light*
" *was interrupted.* The *publick Acts* of the
" Empire are often taken notice of by the
" Writers of the *Auguſtan Hiſtory*, under this
" Name of the *Roman* Annals. But nothing
" more deſerves a nice and accurate Obſerva-
" tion, as to this Affair, than what is related
" in the *Chineſe Hiſtory*, lately written by
" *Hadrian Greſlon*, *viz.* It there ſtands *record-*
" *ed* among the *Chineſe*, at that very Time, that
" correſponds with the XXXII Year of the
" Chriſtian Æra, about the Month of *April*,
" that there happened a *ſolar Eclipſe* contrary
" to the Laws of Nature, and the regular
" Motions of the Planets; at which *ſtrange*
" *Occurrence* their Emperor QUAM-VUTI was
" very much diſturbed. *Kepler* therefore, other-
" wiſe a candid Man, and an excellent Aſtro-
" nomer, acted imprudently, and *a Part that*
" *did not become a Chriſtian*, when, in his Cal-
" culations, he threw back this *Solar Eclipſe*
" mentioned by *Phlegon*, to the ſecond Year of
" the 202d Olympiad, fixing it likewiſe to
" the 24th Day of November. Not leſs ex-
" cuſable is *Voſſius*, who was likewiſe a good
" and a learned Man, in aſſigning ſuch a *Rea-*

" *ſon*

" *ſon* as he does, why *Phlegon's* Eclipſe is not " the *ſame* with that mentioned in the Goſpel: " For *Phlegon*, ſays he, *took this Eclipſe for a* " natural *one*. And that is all he ſays; with- " out telling us, *why* he thought ſo himſelf. " But it is very likely he, as well as other " learned Men, had run into one and the ſame " *Miſtake* on Account of the Word *Eclipſe*, " as thinking nothing but a *regular Defect* of " Light in the Sun (by the Moon's Interpoſi- " tion) could be implied under that Denomi- " nation of an Eclipſe. But how inconſiſtent " *that is* with ſound Reaſoning, will be made " appear preſently. *Origen*, indeed, wrote in " his Commentaries *, that *Phlegon* took no " notice that this *Darkneſs* happened when it " was *Full-Moon*; nor did he take notice of its " happening when it was *New-Moon*; and there- " fore drops it, without determining any Thing " in the Matter. But *Africanus* † interpreted " *Phlegon's* Words in a very different Manner. " *Phlegon*, ſays he, *relates, that in the Reign* " *of* Tiberius, *an Eclipſe of the Sun happened,* " *when it was Full-Moon*. This is to be ſeen " in *Syncellus's* Chronography. *Philoponus* like- " wiſe, in his ſecond Book of the Creation of " the World, repreſents *Phlegon's* Teſtimony " in

* It will appear in the Sequel of this Conference, that ſome other Perſon, and not *Origen*, did write in this Manner. *Ruffinus* was one of the Interpolators of *Origen's* Commentaries. See Dr. *Mills's* Note on *Luke* xxiii. 44.

† It has been obſerved already, that *Africanus* flouriſhed but three or fourſcore Years after *Phlegon*.

" in very different * Words from thoſe of *Eu-*
" *ſebius: Phlegon*, ſays he, *has alſo remembered*
" *this Darkneſs, or rather this Night: For he*
" *ſays, that in the ſecond Year* (it ſhould be
" *fourth* Year, as *Philoponus* reads it himſelf
" in the following Page) *of the 202d Olympiad,*
" *there happened an Eclipſe of the Sun, of that*
" *Nature, that nothing like it was known be-*
" *fore.* And *Philoponus*, to take off any Ob-
" jection that might be made, as if he had
" been Faulty, or had not truly quoted and
" applied *Phlegon*'s Words, adds; *Now, that*
" Phlegon *recognized this Eclipſe, and no other,*
" *as relating to our Lord* Chriſt's *hanging on*
" *the Croſs, is chiefly evident from his ſaying,*
" THAT SUCH † AN ECLIPSE WAS NOT KNOWN
" IN FORMER TIMES. If this then be the
" genuine Reading in *Phlegon*, it is to be
" obſerved, though he calls ſuch Failure of
" Light in the Sun by the Name of an *Eclipſe*,
" yet ſays withal, that no Eclipſe ever hap-
" pened like *this*. There was *no Abſurdity* in
" *Phlegon*'s calling *it* an *Eclipſe*; for in what-
" ever Manner the Light of the Sun may
" *fail* us, it may be ſaid ἐκλείπειν, *deficere*; and
" ſuch *Failure*, whether ordinary or extraor-
" dinary, is an ἔκλειψις, an *Eclipſe*. *Herodotus* will
" confirm

* This, in my Opinion, is one very good Argument for proving, that *Euſebius* has not given the *whole* Paſſage of *Phlegon*; and that therefore *Africanus*, being ſo much a more early Writer than *Euſebius*, ought the rather to be credited in this Affair.

† ἐκ τῦ λέγειν, μὴ ἐγνῶσθαι τὴν τοιαύτην ἔκλειψιν τοῖς πρότερον χρόνοις.

" confirm what we ſay; who ſays, when || *Xer-*
" *xes's* Army was about tranſporting themſelves
" over into *Greece*, that the Sun did ἐκλελοιπέναι,
" *i. e.* its Light failed; when yet *there were no*
" *Clouds*; *and it became Night inſtead of Day.*
" This was not an *ordinary Eclipſe*; the *Dark-*
" *neſs* was a *Prodigy*, as has been demonſtrated
" by *Petavius* *. So the famous *Heſychius*
" talks concerning *Carneades* when he died:
" *The Moon*, ſays he, *failed in her Light, and*
" *the Sun was darkened* †; which Words are
" taken notice of by *Suidas* likewiſe. You
" obſerve then, Sun and Moon both failed to-
" gether; how it happened is uncertain: Such
" *Failures* were, no doubt, but *ſeldom*; and
" yet the *Moon* is ἐκλελοιπέναι, to *fail*. Where-
" fore both *Scaliger* and *Voſſius* were in a very
" great Error, when they imagined, becauſe
" *Phlegon* uſed the Word ἔκλειψις, *Eclipſe*, that
" therefore *Phlegon* muſt neceſſarily be under-
" ſtood ſpeaking of a *natural* Eclipſe. Under
" the ſame Miſtake was *Origen*, in thinking, be-
" cauſe he found the Words ἐκλείποντος ἡλίου, *the*
" *Sun failing* or *eclipſed* in ſome Copies of *Luke's*
" Goſpel, that therefore ſome *Hereticks* had
" corrupted the *Text*, to render the *Goſpel* lia-
" ble to Exceptions on that Score: For which
" ever

|| *Herod.* lib. 7. Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt's* Criticiſm on *this Paſſage* will be conſidered in a proper Place; and at the ſame Time will be produced *Calviſius's* ſingular Obſervations upon this very remarkable *Eclipſe*.

* Petav. de Doctr. Temp. lib. 10. c. 24. *A ſtupendous Prodigy*, ſays Archbiſhop *Uſher*; *ad A. M.* 3524.

† ἡ σελήνη ἐξέλιπε, καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἀμυδρος ἐγένετο.

" ever way St. *Luke* did write *that* Text, the " Senſe and Meaning of it will be the *ſame*, " and ſafe enough from any *Cavils* that may " be ſtarted on that Account. *Africanus* him- " ſelf, likewiſe, was (at firſt) miſtaken, when he " reprehended † *Thallus*, for calling this *Failure* " by the Name of an *Eclipſe*. As to *Bodin's* " quoting of *Phlegon* in that peſtilent *Dia-* " *logue*, (where he ſpits out all his *Jewiſh* " Venom,) he does it in a baſe, diſhoneſt Man- " ner: For he frames a *ſingular* Notion to him- " ſelf, in ſuppoſing that when *Phlegon* had fixed " this Eclipſe to the fourth Year of the *two* " *hundred and tenth* Olympiad, the Sun " was then paſſing through the Conſtellation " *Piſces*; whereas *Phlegon* had ſettled *it* in the " *fourth* Year of the *two hundred and ſecond* " Olympiad, without ſaying *one* Word as to " the Sun's Situation at that Time. Laſtly, " *Tertullian* ſeems to be miſtaken, when he ſays, " *That thoſe, who did not know this to have been* " *foretold of* Chriſt, *though or ſuppoſed it to* " *have been an* ECLIPSE: For it *truly* was an " *Eclipſe*; but an *unuſual one*, and *contrary* to " the *Laws* of *Nature*. Return we to *Voſſius*. " *Phlegon*, ſays he, *tells us, that there was an* " *Earthquake in* Bithynia; *but takes no notice of* " *its being in* Paleſtine. True; *Phlegon* did " not make it his Buſineſs to give a *Detail*

" of

† But, I think, from this *Reprehenſion* uſed by *Africanus*, it may be fairly concluded, that there were not in his Time the Words ἡλίῳ ἐκλείποντος in any of St. *Luke's* Goſpels, at leaſt, in any that he had ſeen.

" of the ſeveral Countries that had felt the
" Shock of that Earthquake; but thought it
" was enough for his Purpoſe, to point out
" *that* Country, which he knew had felt *it* in
" a ſeverer Manner than many others. But, ſays
" he again, *If ſuch a miraculous Eclipſe was ſeen*
" *in* DIFFERENT *Parts of the Earth*, Phlegon
" *would not have been the* ONLY *Perſon to have*
" *taken Notice of it.* True; accordingly *Thal-*
" *lus* took Notice of it, and ſo did the People
" in *China*: But had no other but *Phlegon* done
" it, it would not be an Argument of any Force.
" The ſame Way of Reaſoning was uſed before
" *Origen*, when he was minded to prove,
" that *Judæa* only was ſenſible of this *Dark-*
" *neſs*; the Weakneſs of which Argument has
" been ſhewn. We might, after this, make good
" what we have aſſerted, from the *Teſtimony*
" given by *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*, who, in
" his Epiſtle to *Polycarp*, gives an Account of
" the *Obſervations* that he and *Apollophanes*,
" a Sophiſt, made upon this *wonderful Eclipſe*,
" when they were together at *Heliopolis* in
" *Egypt*. But ſince I ſee theſe *Epiſtles* of *Dyo-*
" *niſius*, and other Writings aſcrib'd to him,
" are now called in Queſtion, and, in my Judg-
" ment, deſervedly ſo; we paſs by this *Teſti-*
" *mony*, and make no uſe of it for the preſent
" Purpoſe." And thus I have acquitted myſelf
in what you deſired to hear from *Huetius*.

*B.* Sir, I'm oblig'd to you; and I can truly affirm, that the *Length* of the Paſſage has not

any ways *leſſen'd* the Satisfaction I propos'd, and have receiv'd from *it*: But I can't help telling you without ſome ſort of *Warmth*, how very *inſincerely* (in my Opinion) our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has here dealt with his *Engliſh* Reader. He has *Quotations* ſometimes long enough: And I muſt think he has *conceal'd* this *Paſſage*, leaſt his own Weakneſs, or bad Deſigns, as well as Dr. *Clarke's* Judgment, ſhould be *farther* call'd in queſtion. However, this *Paſſage* (I own) has taught me, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has ſome People (and of Note too) to keep him in Countenance. There's *Bodin*, *Scaliger*, and *Voſſius*, beſides *Kepler*, that we took notice of before; and as to the *Chineſe Hiſtory*, that's mention'd by *Huetius*, I find Mr. *Whiſton* and our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* are both againſt you. Nay, the former ſeems to inſult upon it; for he ſays, "A great Noiſe has "been made of late about it by ſome very weak "People:" So that you, and your learned Librarian *Dominique de Colonia*, as well as *Huetius* and others, are pretty freely cenſur'd on that Account. I hope you have ſomething to offer by-and-by in your own Defence. At preſent, I deſire to know if you have any Thing to remark in your own Favour, upon *Bodin*, *Scaliger*, and *Voſſius*?

*A.* As to *Bodin*, there need be no more ſaid than has been already; his *Aſſertion* on this Affair of the *Eclipſe* is ſo very extravagant, without having the leaſt Colour of Argument to ſupport it; and his Character ſo very bad, as to the Chriſtian

" Religion,

Religion, which appears to have ſate very looſe upon him, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* thought it more adviſeable to ſay nothing of him. As to *Scaliger* and *Voſſius*, you hear what *Huetius* has ſaid juſt now about it: And every unprejudic'd Reader will think, that he has ſaid enough to diſcover the *Error* of thoſe two great Men, who were led into *it*, as *Africanus* was at firſt ſo many hundred Years before, by reſtraining the Word ἔκλειψις to a *natural* Eclipſe only. That our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* then may have no manner of Shelter under the Names of thoſe *learned Men*, I will make two or three Obſervations from the Writings of *both*; which will fully ſatisfy you, that they were *Men* of a quite different Stamp from our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*. As to *Scaliger*, he ſays * directly, *that* Tertullian (in his Apologetick) *had this very Teſtimony of* Phlegon *in his Thoughts*, when he was appealing to the *Roman Archives*. *Scaliger* likewiſe, upon that noted Paſſage of *Tertullian*, reads the Text not *Arcanis*, but *Archivis veſtris*; and ſo *Rigaltius* likewiſe explains *Arcanis veſtris*. But our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* thought it more for his Purpoſe to tranſlate it *ſecret Accounts*: "How came *Ter-*
"*tullian*, ſays he †, to know what was contain'd
"in theſe *ſecret Accounts*?" This you will have more fully conſider'd, when we come to talk about theſe *publick Records*, and *Pilate's Acts*, which our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* diſcards ALL at once,



* *Scal.* Animadv. in *Euſebii* Chron. p. 171.
† Page 40.

as *forged* (in his Opinion) without making any *Difference* at all. As to *Voſſius*, it appears that he lived to ſee his *Error*, in thinking that the *Eclipſe* mentioned by *Phlegon* was a *natural* one. He talked in this miſtaken Manner, when he wrote his *Harmonia Evangelica* * ; but the laſt Piece he wrote, (which was reviſing and augmenting his Book *de Hiſtoricis Græcis*) happily ſhews us, that he had *changed* his Opinion, was reconciled to the Word *Eclipſe*, and acknowledges that *Phlegon's Eclipſe* † *was to be underſtood as relating to our Savour's Paſſion.* There is the Paſſage, which I deſire you to read; and if you turn to the *Preface*, the Editor there informs us, that this was the laſt Performance || of that great and learned Man *Gerh. John Voſſius.*

*B.* I do read it ſo, as you ſay, much to my Satisfaction; and the lucky Obſervation of the *Editor*, puts it out of all Doubt, that theſe were his *laſt* Thoughts upon this Affair. I ſhould now be glad to hear what you have to ſay to *Kepler's* Hypotheſis, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* makes ſuch a Stir about. I took Notice juſt now, that your good old *Biſhop* blames *Kepler* for

* Lib. 2. c. 10. p. 321, 322.

† Sed non penitùs probare poſſum, quòd idem [*Photius*] reprehendit anxiam illam curam in Olympiadibus [*Phlegontis*] recenſendis, atque iis annotandis, quæ ſingularum Tempore contigerunt. Imò verò, utinam totum Chronicon exſtaret. Multum enim Lucis abſque dubio *priſcæ* inde *Eccleſiæ* temporibus accederet. Atque hoc eo juſtius putamus, quia inter alia induſtriæ Teſtimonia etiam *Eclipſeos* ILLIUS *meminerit, quæ Dominicæ Paſſionis tempore contigit. Voſſ.* de Hiſt. Græcis, p. 219.

|| Pervenerat jam ad finem *hic Liber* [De Hiſt. Gr.] cum mortalitatis Leges impleret magni nominis Autor; cumque nihil aliud quam Præfatio vel Dedicatio deſideraretur.

for it, and that it *did not become a Chriſtian*: But our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* is quite of a different Opinion from that great *Prelate*; for he tells the World, *That ſetting* * *aſide this impertinent Teſtimony of* Phlegon, *he cannot, for his Part, help thinking, is doing a real Service to the Cauſe of* Chriſt. He ſeems to lay a great Streſs upon this *natural Eclipſe*, which happened about *three* Years before our Saviour's Paſſion. This he is pretty ſure is all that *Phlegon* means; and he would have us believe, that, by *the Help of the Fathers*, (which I hope you will *conſider* preſently, as you have promiſed,) he is able to reconcile all Difference in Point of Time. *Kepler*, it is plain, was wavering in this Matter, making his Conjectures ſometimes this Way, ſometimes *that*: But this Gentleman has ſo *refined* upon *Kepler*, and called the *Primitive Writers* to his Aſſiſtance in ſuch a Manner, that *Lucian*, *Tertullian*, and others, that *appealed* to the *Roman Archives*, and (as you took Notice from *Scaliger* juſt now) *appealed* really to this very Teſtimony of *Phlegon*, muſt loſe their Credit for the future; and if they *loſe* it in *one* particular, it is natural to think, that my *old Fraternity* will thank our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, and ſoon put the ſhort Queſtion, Why the *Veracity* of ſuch *Fathers* may not be ſuſpected in other Particulars, as well as *that*. It is very plain, this *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has done what he can to *leſſen* People's Eſteem for *Juſtin Martyr*, and

* Pag. 4, 5.

and *Tertullian*, as well as ſome other primitive Writers. But this is not the Point now before us. Give me leave, before I hear you, as to *Kepler*, to read a Paſſage or two from our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, wherein he endeavours to corroborate *Kepler*'s Hypotheſis, and expreſſes himſelf very *ſanguinely* upon the whole. "The *only* Thing "that is objected againſt *Kepler*'s Account of "this Matter, (ſays he) is, * that it is not "conſiſtent with the Cuſtom of the *Greek* Lan-"guage, to ſay, *In the Year* of the 202d Olym-"piad: That therefore ſome *Numeral* ought "neceſſarily to be put, to expreſs the *firſt* Year, "as well as the ſubſequent ones. But how *eaſy* "is the Solution of this? If *Phlegon* deſigned "the Eclipſe in the *firſt* Year of the 202d "Olympiad, the *Greek* Text of *Euſebius* is to "be *corrected* by the ſmalleſt Alteration poſſible "in the *Greek Numbers*, by putting an A in-"ſtead of a Δ; and then the Language, and the "Nature of Things, and, which is *very re-*"*markable*, *all thoſe* who firſt applied the Teſti-"mony of *Phlegon* to the *Year* of the Death "of *Chriſt*, will *all agree*." When he comes to recapitulate, at the Cloſe of all, he thus expreſſes himſelf; "Since as good Evidence, and "as many Vouchers, are to be brought for "*Phlegon*'s Eclipſe happening either the *fourth* "Year of the 201ſt, or the *firſt* Year of the 202d "Olimpiad, as for its happening the *fourth* Year "of the 202d Olimpiad: (ſuch are *Africanus* and *Origen* againſt *Euſebius* and *Jerom*:) And

* Pag. 73, 74.

"ſince

" ſince in *Fact* there was ſuch an Eclipſe, as " *Phlegon deſcribes* in the *firſt* Year; and the " *Alteration* of the Numerals in *Greek*, from " an A to a Δ, *i. e.* from the *firſt* to the *fourth*, " is ſo *very ſmall*, that the Miſtake is very eaſy; " I think, that it is moſt propable, if not cer- " tain, that *Phlegon* mentioned this Eclipſe in " the *firſt* Year of the 202d Olympiad, and " that *Euſebius miſtook* in citing it under the " *fourth*."

*A.* I perceive theſe Paſſages make you *ſmile*; and well they may. This ſmall *Alteration* in the *Greek* Numbers; this *eaſy Miſtake* in *Euſebius*, and the happy *Agreement* of all Parties upon this wonderful Diſcovery made by our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, are, I own, very wonderful Things; and I ſuppoſe, you read theſe *two* Paſſages, to make your ſelf and me merry. Were this fancied *Alteration* to be admitted, inſtead of that *remarkable Agreement* he talks of, we ſhould find every Thing *out of Order*. Can you read the Paſſage of *Africanus*, (as cited by our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* himſelf *,) and then recon- cile *his Words* to a *natural* Eclipſe; as muſt be the Caſe, if our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* is to make *all Parties agree?* What if we ſuppoſe (which as it will be proved by-and-by, neither can nor ought to be ſuppoſed) that *Africanus* and *Eu- ſebius* did *really* and *materially* differ *three* or *four* Years, as to the *Time* of our Saviour's ſuf- fering; and ſhould we admit, that in theſe ſeemingly,

* Page 13.

ſeemingly different *Supputations*, *Africanus* is in the right, yet his Words, I ſay, contradict *that natural* Eclipſe which our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* would eſtabliſh. *Origen*, you have heard more than once, expreſsly *applies* this Teſtimony of *Phlegon* to the *Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Paſſion, in his Book againſt *Celſus*; and therefore, neither can he, any Thing more than *Africanus*, be brought as a *Voucher* for the wild Scheme of our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*. And as to his imperfect and interpolated Commentary on St. *Matthew*, you will hear it ſpoke to hereafter. As to *Euſebius*, I can venture to ſay, he could not any ways be guilty of the *Miſtake* which he is charged with; and which *Miſtake*, he ſays, *aroſe from an* HYPOTHESIS. For what *Hypotheſis*, do you think, was this? *Euſebius* ſays, that Chriſt ſuffered the 18th of *Tiberius*; and he was ſo honeſt, as well as *Jerome*, and others, to rely on the SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT for the Truth of this Matter. "The Goſpel of St. "*John*, ſays St. *Jerom*, gives us *Proof ſuffici-* "*ent*, that our Saviour *died that* Year; for it "is ſaid therein, that the Lord *preached three* "*Years* after the 15th of *Tiberius*." But you ſee the SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT is quite out of the Caſe with our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*; and indeed it was but neceſſary that he ſhould ſet *it* aſide, when he was ſetting aſide the Teſtimony of *Phlegon*; for he knew it was agreed on all Hands, that there could be no *natural* Eclipſe to ſerve his Purpoſe in or about the 18th of *Tiberius*.

*Tiberius*. As to the *Olympiads*, I believe it will not be queſtioned, but that *Euſebius*, *Jerom*, *Scaliger*, and others, knew ſomething better than our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, *how* to adjuſt *them* with the *Years* of *Tiberius*; and you will have it made abundantly evident by-and-by from a very accurate Chronologer, how by *various Supputations* it came to paſs, that the *Fathers ſeemingly* differed ſo much about the *Time* of our *Saviour's* Paſſion. The *Scripture Account* was ſtill acknowledged on both Sides by the *Fathers*; which is a certain Argument that their different Calculations were only in *Appearance* ſo. But hold! *Kepler's* Hypotheſis, which our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* eſpouſes, is the particular Matter now before us. Pleaſe to turn to Pages 4 and 6, of his Pamphlet; and after reading thoſe two ſhort Paſſages, you will ſee the Obligation a certain *Mathematician* was under to anſwer our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*: In this Matter he is allowed to have done *this Part* thoroughly: I wiſh he did every Thing elſe as well. Pleaſe to read then.

*B.* I think myſelf the more obliged to *this*, becauſe Mr. *Whiſton*, in his *Hiſtorical Memoirs* of Dr. *Clarke*, has in ſo remarkable a Manner mentioned this Affair. [Phlegon's *Eclipſe*] "*A* "*Book!' wherein that Man of Warmth, and Zeal,* "*and Indiſcertion, has taken a matchleſs Liberty* "*to miſrepreſent and abuſe* myſelf, *as well as* "others; *to paſs hard Cenſures upon ſome* Facts, "*which he knew not the true Grounds of*; *and*

" *to relate ſome direct* Falſhoods, *without con-*
" *ſulting or regarding the* only *Perſons that*
" *could have ſet him right.*" The other Paſſage runs thus: " Mr. *Whiſton*, has already received " great Advantages from my *Miſtake*, (*about* " *this Eclipſe of* Phlegon's,) if it be a Miſtake; " becauſe it has been one Occaſion of ſome of " the *nobleſt and moſt important Diſcoveries that* " *he ever made in Aſtronomy and Chronology.*" The *firſt* Paſſage is *plain* enough; and, I believe, that Mr. *W.* thought it *too much* ſo: But this *other* wants a little explaining; and therefore, as I have not ſeen thoſe *Hiſtorical Memoirs*, here referred to, pleaſe to oblige me in that Particular.

*A.* What you deſire will be no *Digreſſion*, and 'tis a *Paragraph* well worth your hearing. The *firſt* Paſſage you juſt now read, is *plain* enough, indeed, as you obſerve, in reſpect of Mr. *W.* but in regard to the *Facts*, it muſt be an *obſcure* one, without being acquainted with the *Memoirs*. This would open a *large Field* for you and I to range in another Hour or two, and occaſion (I do aſſure you) ſome very *odd Speculations*: But this would now be a *real Digreſſion*; and therefore I am ſatisfied, you are willing it ſhould be *poſtponed*. There is one Thing I readily agree with our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* in, *viz.* that Mr. *W.* has ſhewn himſelf a Man of great *Indiſcretion* in thoſe *Memoirs*; for there are *many Things* that your *old Fraternity* wiſhes had lain *concealed* for ſometime longer. But then

then, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* muſt leave off charging Mr. *W.* as a Man of *Warmth*; for you obſerve, under all the *hard Language, and rough Treatment* that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* gives him, he appears, in his Vindication, as *tame*, as *tranquille* as poſſible; and perhaps a tolerable good Account might be given of *this Conduct*, were it neceſſary. But I forget myſelf, in what you deſire. The *Paragraph* in Mr. *W*'s *Memoirs* is this; * "Some Time before Dr. *Clarke* died, "Dr. *Sykes* perſuaded him to leave out of the "future Editions † of his *Boyle's Lectures*, that "famous Paſſage in *Phlegon*, of an Eclipſe of "the Sun, and an Earthquake, which was "cited by him, and has been generally cited "by others of the Learned, as an Atteſtation "to the ſuper-natural Eclipſe of the Sun, and "the Earthqake at our Saviour's Paſſion, men-"tioned by the Evangeliſts. When I came to "enquire of Dr. *Sykes*, his Reaſons for ſuch his "Perſuaſion of Dr. *Clarke*, *I found it was only* "*a* Suppoſal, *that ſome natural Solar Eclipſe* "*or other might be fitted to ſome Earthquake in* "Bithynia; *at which Place alone*, Phlegon "*ſpake of the Effects of his Earthquake.* Upon "this, being greatly diſpleaſed with him for "going upon a *Suppoſal*, in a Thing that was "capable of *Certainty*, I took the Pains to cal-"culate, by my *Copernicus*, all the natural "Eclipſes of the Sun, that could happen in



* *Whiſton*'s Hiſtor. Memoirs of Dr. *Clarke*, p. 148, 149, 150.

† Page 273. Edit. 5.

" any Year that *Phlegon* could mean. And I
" found, *that no natural Eclipſe of the Sun*
" *could poſſibly happen, ſo as to ſuit his Deſcrip-*
" *tion, but only that ſuper-natural one at the Paſ-*
" *ſion, which exactly agreed to it.* This was
" fit to be mentioned here, not only to prevent
" any ſuch Alteration in Dr. *Clarke's* Sermons,
" (which Alteration, how he came to be per-
" ſuaded to make upon ſuch a *groundleſs Suggeſti-*
" *on*, I cannot imagine,) but alſo on Account of
" the Conſequence of thoſe, and the like Cal-
" culations of Eclipſes to myſelf. For it was
" this *pretended Correction* that was one Occa-
" ſion of ſome of the nobleſt and moſt impor-
" tant Diſcoveries that I ever made in Aſtro-
" nomy and Chronology; I only here hint at
" their principal Contents, *viz.* that none of
" the Aſtronomical Characters of Chronology,
" now preſerved, reach earlier than about 500,
" Years after the Flood, in the ſacred Chrono-
" logy: That this ſacred Chronology is, how-
" ever, to be taken from the *Samaritan Pen-*
" *tateuch*, *Septuagint* Verſion, and *Joſephus*,
" and not from our *Maſorete Copy*; which laſt
" Chronology, ſeveral of thoſe ancient aſtrono-
" mical Characters do plainly contradict; that
" the *Chineſe* Annals, when determined by the
" *Julian* Year of 365¼ Days ſince the *Olym-*
" *piads* began, and by the old Year of 360
" Days before that Time; and when at their
" Beginning they are reduced 500 Years later
" than they now ſtand; perfectly agree with the

" Aſtronomical

" Aſtronomical Characters, and the before-men-
" tioned ſacred Chronology, but not otherwiſe:
" That the Prophet *Amos* was the firſt that
" ever foretold Eclipſes of the Sun, and an
" Earthquake; and the Prophet *Iſaiah* the
" ſecond; and that he not only foretold an
" Eclipſe of the Sun, an Eclipſe of the Moon,
" and an Earthquake, but an *Occultation* of the
" Stars by the Moon; and that *Jeremiah* fore-
" told the *Eclipſe of the Sun at our Saviour's Paſ-*
" *ſion*; all which exactly came to paſs according-
" ly. That *Thales* foretold his famous Eclipſe,
" not by Aſtronomy, which could not be done
" till above 400 Years after his Time, but ra-
" ther by learning it from the *Jews* in *Egypt*,
" who had it from the Prophet *Iſaiah*. That
" the grand *intermediate Breaches* in every one
" of the four Monarchies were immediately
" preceded by great Eclipſes of the Sun, and
" their *Endings* by great Eclipſes of the Moon;
" all viſible in the ſame Monarchies. And that
" accordingly, 1736, (the grand Period of the
" ten Kingdoms, or of the laſt State of the *Ro-*
" *man* Monarchy,) will be peculiarly remark-
" able for ſuch great Eclipſes of the Moon.
" All which Diſcoveries are of the utmoſt Im-
" portance, and by me *demonſtrated* all along
" from aſtronomical Calculations."

*B.* I muſt confeſs theſe aſtronomical Calcula-
tions pleaſe me much; and I cannot help com-
mending Mr. *W.* in honeſtly *rebuking* our *Anti-*
*Phlegoniſt* for going upon a *Suppoſal*, in a Thing

that

that was capable of *Certainty*; and a *Thing* of that Importance, may I add, where the Honour and Intereſt of the Chriſtian Religion is ſo much concerned, in Oppoſition to my *old Fraternity*. But, methinks, when our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, after this Converſation, came to read theſe *Hiſtorical Memoirs*, and found that Mr. *W.* had actually taken the Pains to calculate, and upon pawning the Faith and Credit of his *Copernicus*, had aſſured him, that *no natural Eclipſe of the Sun could poſſibly happen, ſo as to ſuit* Phlegon's *Deſcription*, but *only that ſupernatural one at the Paſſion, which exactly agreed to it*; I ſay, after all this, methinks our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſhould have repented, and ſuffered the Chriſtian Religion to have ſtood upon its old Bottom. But *Kepler*'s Hypotheſis was got into his Head; and it is very plain he muſt have ſome very *odd Ends* in view, inſtead of *doing real Service to the Cauſe of* Chriſt, when he was reſolved to ſet aſide ſuch a glorious *Teſtimony*, given by a Heathen, in behalf of his Saviour, though he had his Friend *Whiſton*'s MATHEMATICAL CERTAINTY, that ſuch Teſtimony was *true*.

*A.* I know not well what to ſay to theſe Things. *Free-Thinking* (as you have obſerved, no doubt, amongſt your *quondam* Fraternity) knows no Bounds, nor will admit of any. You ſee, they talk as freely of *Jeſus* Chriſt, and his *Miracles*, as they do of *Mahomet* the Impoſtor; and all *Facts which are appealed to* (though never

never ſo well proved) as *Evidence* for the Chriſtian Religion, are to be rendered *diſputable*, " ſome way or other; as in the preſent Caſe. " The Addition of *very diſputable*, if not totally " *impertinent Teſtimonies*, (ſays our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* *) does but weaken the Evidence; " it never can poſſibly add any Force to what " is urged for the Truth of Chriſtianity." But let our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* recollect, that *Julian*'s *diſputing* about *Facts*, made the *Truths* of Chriſtianity ſhine out with a greater Luſtre. Beſides, it may be farther obſerved, in regard to to ſuch *latitudinarian* Attempts, what the ſame judicious and learned Perſon, I have named already, † has obſerved. " I know not how far, " ſays he, an *Affectation* of *Singularity*, or an " Ambition to be thought *wiſer* than the reſt " of the World, may have carried ſome Per- " ſons: —— To reject any Thing *vulgar*, " though ever ſo *true* and *right*, as if it were any " Commendation to be *ſingularly Iniudicious*; " or as if, becauſe it is honourable to *exceed* the " common Standard, it were honourable like- " wiſe, only to *differ* from it, or *not to come up* " *to it*; which is manifeſtly the Caſe of our mo- " dern *Deiſts*, however highly they may pleaſe " to think of themſelves: And the ſame may " be ſaid of *Free-Thinking* in general." But our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, I muſt remind you, has alledged ſomething in his own Defence againſt this

* Page 5.

† Dr. *Waterland*'s ſecond Charge, p. 8, 9.

this *Calculation* of Mr. *W.* He lets us know that Mr. *Whiſton* and *he* had a *ſecond* Meeting, after reading of the *Hiſtor. Memoirs*; and that Mr. *W.* was ſatisfied about *Kepler*'s Hypotheſis. I will read you his own Words † ; and then, if you have any *Remarks* to make, let me have them. "I believe it to be true in Fact (ſays "our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*) that Mr. *Whiſton* had "calculated every Year, *but the one only true* "*one*, when he publiſhed his Book, [the *Me-*"*moirs.*] But when it was told him afterwards "by myſelf, that *Kepler* meant an Eclipſe that "was total in the *firſt* Year of the CCIId Olym-"piad, and I had ſhewn him *Kepler*'s Book; "he went to his *Computations* again, and found "it to be as *Kepler* ſaid." What have you to ſay to this?

*B.* This does not prove that Mr. *W.* was in the leaſt of an Opinion that *Kepler*'s Eclipſe and *Phlegon*'s were *one* and the *ſame*; which was the grand Point in debate between them. I am very ſure, that Mr. *W.* has lately told our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, in a *publick* * Manner, that he *thinks* quite otherwiſe. Mr. *W.* has remarked no leſs than *five* Characters given by *Phlegon* of his Eclipſe, all different from thoſe of *Kepler*'s Eclipſe.

*A.* I am much pleaſed, that Mr. *Whiſton* has been called upon to anſwer in this Affair; and, I believe

† Page 75.

* Mr. *Whiſton*'s Vindication of *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony, *&c.* p. 46, 47, *&c.*

I believe, we ſhall hear no more from our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* about *Kepler*'s Hypotheſis. I am perſuaded, there needs no *other* Pen to give any impartial Perſon Satisfaction in *that Particular*.

*B.* I have contracted what that *Mathematician* has ſaid upon it, in as narrow a Compaſs as I could, that I may the better defend myſelf, when any *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſhall attack me upon *Kepler*'s Hypotheſis. I dare ſay, you will not think me troubleſome, if I let you ſee in what Manner I have contrived this Piece of Armour: Pleaſe to caſt an Eye on it; or if you will, I will read it to you; thus,

| | |
|---|---|
| The *ſupernatural* Darkneſs at the Paſſion of *Chriſt*, 3d *April*, *A. D.* XXXIII. | The *natural* Eclipſe of the Sun, mentioned by *Kepler*, 24th *Nov.* *A. D.* XXIX. |
| *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, by all the Evidence we have, was on the *fourth* Year of the CCIId Olympiad. In the ſame Year was the *Darkneſs* at the Paſſion of *Chriſt*, | *Kepler*'s Eclipſe was on the *firſt* Year of the CCIId Olympiad, |
| *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe was the *greateſt that ever was known before.* The *Greatneſs* of ſolar Eclipſes, | The *Duration* of total Darkneſs, in all natural ſolar Eclipſes, is very rarely ſo much as |

eclipſes, that are total, *five* Minutes. *Kepler's* is chiefly ſeen in the Eclipſe, if it were at *Length* of their Dura- all total, along the cen-tion. The *ſupernatu-* tral Shadow, (which is *ral* Darkneſs continued not certain,) it could be *three* Hours. *ſo* but a very ſmall Part of *one* Minute.

In *Phlegon's* Eclipſe, As to *Kepler's* Eclipſe, *the Day became Night,* when, by Calculation, *and the Stars appear'd*; *Jupiter* was below the which well agrees to Horizon, 'tis a great the *ſupernatural*, and Queſtion, whether *any* long Darkneſs at our *one Star*, excepting Saviour's Paſſion. There *Venus*, which is fre-muſt have been more quently ſeen in the Stars ſeen in *Phlegon's* Day-Time alſo, could Eclipſe, than in our or- be at all viſible; I mean dinary *great* Eclipſes; this in the Path of the becauſe *Phlegon* informs central Shadow, along us, this was a *greater* the *Mediterranean*, a-Eclipſe than any of bout 400 Miles from them. *Nice*. But as for *Nice* itſelf, the Digits eclips'd were no more than nine or ten.

*Phlegon's* Eclipſe be- *Kepler's* Eclipſe be-gan at the *Sixth* Hour gan about the *ſecond* or of the Day, or at Noon; *third* Hour, or about as did the *Darkneſs* at *eight* or *nine* of the our Saviour's Paſſion. Clock in the Morning,

*Phlegon's* that

that is, a little after Sun-riſing, which three or four Hours, at *that Time* of the Year, is a very great *Difference.*

*Phlegon's* great and extraordinary Eclipſe was accompanied with a-like great and extraordinary *Earthquake*, reaching as far as *Bithynia*; as was the Caſe of the *Darkneſs* and Eclipſe at our Saviour's Paſſion.

Of ſuch *Coincidence* in *Kepler's* Eclipſe, there is not the leaſt Evidence in the World.

*A.* I very much approve of the Method you have taken: It is ſhort and eaſy, and you know how to improve upon it. But let me tell you, you muſt not *ſtop here*: Mr. *W.* has ſhewn our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* in a very proper Ligh', as well in regard to his *refining* (as I told you ſome Time ago) upon this wild Hypotheſis of *Kepler*, as alſo to his Pretenſions of perſuading Dr. *Clarke* upon it; at which Mr. *W.* wonders extremely, (who knew Dr. *Clarke* much better than our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*,) and he plainly lets the World know, that Dr. *Clark*, in his Opinion, was worked upon *ſome other Way*, in ſtriking out this *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon*. The *Paragraph* is rather too long, conſidering the *Time* already ſpent; but it is neceſſary we ſhould have

it, for the Reaſons I have given you; and therefore pray read it. Turn to Page 49. and let me adviſe you afterwards to make no Abridgment of it; for I think it is ſo *pithy*, that nothing can well be ſpared.

*B.* Mr. *W.* at *that* Page expreſſes himſelf thus; "This being the true and certain State "of the *Facts* and *Teſtimonies*, as to the Eclipſe "mentioned by *Phlegon*, in the firſt ſix Cen- "turies: And the *Pretences* againſt its Appli- "cation to the Darkneſs at Chriſt's Paſſion, "being ſo *entirely groundleſs*, tho' lately ſaid "to be *almoſt certain*; it remains to me a very "*difficult Problem*, how that great and judici- "ous Perſon, Dr. *Clarke*, ſhould ſo *eaſily be per- "ſuaded* to give up *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony, upon "the producing of *Kepler*'s Hypotheſis; *ſuppo- "ſing it was produced to him. Kepler* himſelf "was indeed ſo vehemently deſirous to *remove* "*Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, as fixed to the *fourth* "Year of the CCIId Olympiad, or *A. D.* "XXXIII. out of the Way of his own Hypo- "theſis, (which was, that *Chriſt* died the ſecond "Year * of that Olympiad, or *A. D.* XXXI.) "that without Pretence to *MSS.* or any real "Evidence, he firſt changed the Δ, † or *fourth*, "into Γ, or *third*; and when that would not "do, he changed the Δ, ‖ or *fourth*, into Β, or "*ſecond*. And when that darling Year ap- "peared to have no Eclipſe to his Purpoſe, he "ventured

* Tab. Rudolph. p. 43.
† *Ibid.*
‖ Eclog. Chron. p. 87.

" tured a Step farther, and took away the Δ,
" or *fourth*, or rather chang'd it for a Sort of
" an Expletive Δε*; by which Means the
" *Paſſage* only determined us to the CCIId
" Olympiad in general, without denoting any
" *particular* Year of that Olympiad: Which
" yet *Kepler* would have to denote its *firſt* Year
" only: *For he did not venture to ſubſtitute an*
" A *inſtead of a* Δ *for the* firſt *Year of that Olym-*
" *piad, as it has been ſince* thought proper *to*
" *do.* On which Year *Kepler* found ſuch an
" Eclipſe of the Sun, (not as he deſired, which
" was one total for four or five Minutes,
" with many Stars viſible, and that at *Nice* alſo;
" and beginning at Noon, and accompanied with
" a great Earthquake, but) as the Heavens
" would afford him; which was one that *might*
" be total within 400 Miles of *Nice*, for four
" or five Seconds, with *One* Star viſible, and
" beginning in the *Morning*, and *without* any
" Earthquake. Nay, *Kepler* once ventured to
" hint at another ſtill wilder Hypotheſis, *viz.*
" that *this* † *Darkneſs* in *Judæa* might be
" owing, not to any Eclipſe of the Sun at all,
" but to a *Cloud of Smoak and Aſhes* driven
" into *Paleſtine* from *Ætna* or *Veſuvius.* In
" this Vehemence of *Kepler*'s *Inclinations*, I do
" not ſo much wonder at his Determinations:
" We ſee every Day what mighty Things *ſtrong*
" *Inclinations* can do. *But knowing Dr.* Clarke
" *had*

* Eclog. Chron. p. 126.
† Epit. Aſtron. p. 896. Aſtron. optic. ap. Ricciol. Almag. Vol. I. p. 359

" *had no violent Paſſions at all*; *and not be-*
" *lieving he had any particular Inclination to*
" *ſet aſide* Phlegon's *Teſtimony*, *eſpecially*, *not*
" *to leave it out of his Book in the* eighth, *after*
" *it had ſtood there* ſeven *Editions*: *I cannot*
" *ſolve this* Problem; *How* Kepler's *Eclipſe*, *ſo*
" *imperfectly ſtated by him*, *and of ſo little Con-*
" *ſequence when ſtated to the beſt Advantage*,
" *could prevail upon Dr.* Clarke *to diſcard* it.
" *Kepler* puts his Eclipſe once upon *Nov.* 25.
" and then on the 24th. In one Place it is *al-*
" *moſt total*; in another it is *total*: And in one
" Part of a Sentence he ſuppoſes *it* to belong
" to twelve o'-Clock, while, in another Part, *it*
" belongs to ten. In another Place to ten, or
" eleven, or twelve. And this is not *much*
" *leſs ſtrange*, if we ſuppoſe that the additional
" *Evidence*, now taken out of *Origin*'s Latin
" Works, (in Oppoſition to his *Greek*,) was
" alſo produced to Dr. *Clarke*: Since he, with
" all the learned World, well knew thoſe Latin
" Works, in ſuch a Caſe, to be in a Manner of
" no Authority at all. *So that I muſt entirely*
" *leave this* Problem *to ſuch as can better ac-*
" *count for it*; *it being ſtill*, *I confeſs*, *to me ut-*
" *terly inſoluble.*"

*A.* Since Mr. *W.* is utterly at a Loſs in *accounting* for this *Perſuaſion* of Dr. *Clarke*; I will take it in my Turn by-and-by, (as I promiſed you about an Hour ago,) and make the beſt Conjecture I can about it. In the mean Time I am to anſwer an *Objection*, as you have deſired, touching

touching the *Difference*, that our *Anti-Phlegonist* repreſents to be amongſt the *Fathers* about the *Time* of our Saviour's Suffering. The *Difference*, he tells us, is not leſs than *three* Years; and you obſerve, he lays a Streſs on *it*, as thinking by that Means to make *Kepler*'s Eclipſe *coincide* with *that* of *Phlegon*'s, and conſequently that *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe was no other than a *natural* one. "That there was a *real Eclipſe* "(ſays * he) in the *firſt* Year of the CCIId "Olympiad, that is, in the *Year* which *Africanus* "ſuppoſed Chriſt *to die in*, appears by *Calcula*-"*tion*: *Phlegon*'s Words are expreſs and clear, "aſſerting an *Eclipſe of the Sun*; and they ex-"preſs ſuch an Effect, as a *natural* Eclipſe in "a ſerene Day would produce; but they are "not *applicable* to any other Kind of extraor-"dinary Darkneſs." Here are ſeveral *Miſtakes* huddled together in a very few Words. The Word [*Eclipſe*] you ſee, he will by no Means allow of as *applicable* to a ſupernatural Darkneſs; and yet, methinks, *Africanus*'s *ſecond* Thoughts upon the Matter, and *Huetius*'s ſound Reaſoning upon it, might have given him all reaſonable Satisfaction in that Point. He will not allow, that *Phlegon*'s *Words*, ſuch as *the Day became Night, and the Stars appeared*; *began at the ſixth Hour of the Day*; *the greateſt* (i. e. in Duration) *that ever was known before*; accompanied with *an Earthquake reaching as far as* Bithynia; will not allow, I ſay, that theſe *Words*

* Pag. 97, 98.

*Words* can be any ways *applied* to the *ſupernatural* Darkneſs at our Saviour's Paſſion; and yet every one ſees the *Application* is eaſy, without any forced Conſtruction put upon the Words of *Phlegon*; and I hope, by this Time, Mr. *W.* has *convinced* him, that *Phlegon's Words* likewiſe directly *diſagree* with the *Characters* given of *Kepler's* Eclipſe, which he ſeems to be ſo paſſionately fond of.

*B.* Sir, I am not without Hopes, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* will ſee and acknowledge his *Error* too in this Matter, if he be *ſincere* in what he profeſſes. His Introduction cloſes, you know, with Words pretty remarkable; "When the *Reaſons* (ſays he) upon which I "made my Judgment appear, I ſhall be glad "to ſee him, (Mr. *W.*) or any one elſe, make "greater Advantages ſtill from *them:* And I "ſhall not be *ſorry* to find myſelf *confuted*, be-"cauſe I ſhall then have this additional *Teſti-"mony* unqueſtionable, which *at preſent* I "do not conceive to have *any Relation* to "the Paſſion of our Saviour." I beg pardon for interrupting you. You was going to anſwer the *Objection*, as to the great Difference in Point of *Time* among the *Fathers*, in regard to our Saviour's Paſſion. It ſounds very odd, I muſt confeſs, that *Africanus* ſhould affirm, that our Saviour died in the 15th of *Tiberius*, when he knew the *Scripture Account* was otherwiſe; that our Saviour did *then* begin his *Miniſtry*; and that there were *three Paſſovers* compleat

pleat from that Time to his Crucifixion. But pleaſe to proceed in explaining this Affair.

*A.* I heartily wiſh, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* may own his *Error* in theſe Things; but there is too much Reaſon to queſtion his *Sincerity*, as to the very particular we are now entering upon: For can it well be ſuppoſed, that he was ignorant, how that the *Fathers* have *different* Ways and Rules in making their *Supputations*, and yet are ſo to be adjuſted, as to have no *real* Difference at all? It was better, indeed, for our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s Purpoſe, to paſs by the *Scripture Account*, and to adhere to that of *Africanus*, which was *ſeemingly* ſo very different. And yet it will be found, that *Africanus* no ways contradicted the *Evangeliſts* neither. But *this* was to be *concealed*; otherwiſe our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* could not argue in the Manner he does: "If therefore *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, "ſays he, was at the *ſame* * *Time of the Year* "that *Africanus* conceived the *Death* of *Chriſt* "to be, it is evident he muſt ſuppoſe *it* to "have been in the 15th Year of *Tiberius*, *i. e.* it "muſt have been, not in the 4th Year of the "CCIId Olympiad, but in the 4th Year of "the CCIſt. It is *abſurd* therefore for *Euſe-*"*bius* and *Jerom*, (who fixed the *Death* of "*Chriſt* to the 3d or 4th Year of the CCIId "Olimpiad,) to quote *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony "for *it*, when the Difference betwixt *them* and "*Africanus* was plainly *three* or four Years.



* Pag. 17, 18.

You obſerve, how free our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* is, in charging *Abſurdities* upon theſe *two* great Men, who were far from being Strangers to the Works of *Africanus*; nor did they apprehend any *Abſurdity*, (nor *Scaliger* after them,) in quoting *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony, as they have done. Though we have not *Africanus*'s five Books of Chronology under his own Name; yet *Euſebius*, we find, has inſerted almoſt all of *it* into his own Chronicle, either in altering, adding, or correcting, as he thought proper. But let our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſhew where *Euſebius* complains of any ſuch *real* Difference in Chronology between him and *Africanus*; and till he does that, the *Abſurdity* lies at his own Door. I took Notice ſometime ago, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* had not quoted *Africanus* ſo far as he ought to have done, for doing him Juſtice. He concludes the Paſſage from *Africanus* * thus: "But this Darkneſs was from "God, becauſe the Lord then ſuffered." Mr. *Whiſton* adds from *Africanus*; (but I think he ſhould have gone farther too;) "And Reaſon "ſhews us that the LXX Weeks in *Daniel* "were fulfilled at *this Time*." *Africanus*'s Calculation then follows, which ended on the ſecond or third Year of the CCIId Olympiad. "*Africanus*'s Reaſoning (ſays Mr. *W.* †) "rather brings it to the third Year of the "CCIId Olympiad; that being juſt 475 ſolar "Years, or 490 Lunar Years from the 4th "Year

* Pag. 13, 14.
† Pag. 32.

" Year of the LXXXIII Olympiad, which, " both *Africanus* and *Ptolemy*'s Canon agree, " was the 20th of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, the " Date of *Daniel*'s LXX Weeks in *Africa-* " *nus*'s Hypotheſis. *Jerom*'s preſent Copies, " indeed, ſay twice, without all *Pretence to* " *Truth*, || that *Africanus* believed the *Death* of " Chriſt to have been on the 15th Year of *Ti-* " *berius*, or the 4th of the CCIſt Olympiad; " which is the very Year, when *all Chriſtians* " *knew*, from St. *Luke*, that *John the Baptiſt*, " his Forerunner, did but *begin* his Miniſtry." You may ſee more to this Purpoſe in Mr. *W*'s Vindication. [p. 33.] But, I think, this does not yet come up to the Point, in ſetting *it* in ſo full and juſt a Light, as it ought to be. The learned Primate, then of *Ireland*, * obſerves, upon thoſe Words of St. *Luke* [Chap. iii. 1.] *In the* FIFTEENTH *Year of the Reign of* Tiberius Cæſar, *a different Supputation*, in regard to the *Proconſular* and *Imperial* Government of *Tiberius*: It was the *fifteenth* Year in reſpect of the one; but reckoning from the *Death* of *Auguſtus*, it was the *thirteenth* †. And this Diſtinction you



|| It is plain from this Paſſage, that Mr. *Whiſton* is ignorant of the *two Epochæ* in *Tiberius*'s Reign: So that *Jerom*'s Copies are *true*. See the learned *Benedict*, Editors of *Jerom*'s Works.

* Anno *decimo quinto* Principatus Tiberii Cæſaris.] Qui Monarchiæ ipſius, ab exceſſu *Auguſti* cæptæ, erat *decimus tertius*, *Uſſerii* Annales Ed. Par. p. 619.

† Paſſus Chriſtus juxta Sanctum *Maximum* & Georgium *Syncellum*, Anno Dionyſiano XXXI. Litera Dominicali *G* inſignito, quo ideo Dies 23 Martii cum feria ſexta concurrebat, Anno nempe 19 *Tiberii*, ut *Maximus*, p. 356. & *Syncellus*, p. 319 ſcribunt. Ubi

Annos

will find, will often help you out, when your *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, from ſeveral Authors, is amuſing you with *different* Supputations. *Auguſtus* reign'd, if we take it from the Death of *Julius Cæſar*, *fifty ſeven* Years, and died the *nineteenth* of *Auguſt*, when *Tiberius* ſucceeded him. The *laſt* Year therefore of *Auguſtus*'s Reign was not a *compleat* Year, but rather one *Half* of it; and conſequently *ſo* was the *firſt* Year of *Tiberius*, *i. e.* about *five* Months, from *Auguſt* to *January*, whence the *Romans* began their Year. A learned *Franciſcan*, who has profeſſedly treated of the Matter now before us, and *that* in a very accurate and judicious Manner, will give you all the Satisfaction, if I miſtake not, that you can poſſibly deſire about *it*. He's near at hand, and if you are not *tired*, I'll read to you what I ſhall judge moſt proper at this Time.

*B.* I hope, you will not entertain ſo hard a Thought of me, as to imagine, I had the leaſt Inclination to leave off, in diſcuſſing a *Subject* that I have ſo much at heart: I rather wiſh another agreeable Hour may paſs, before we make an End of it. But pleaſe to let me know in the firſt Place, who and what this learned *Franciſcan* is, or when he flouriſh'd.

*A.* His

Annos *Tiberii* ab ejus *Imperio Proconſulari* (ut communiter Antiqui, quandò de Baptiſmo aut *Morte* Chriſti loquuntur) uterque deducit, ab Anno nempe Dionyſiano 13; cum tamen Anno 11 aut 12 *Tiberii*, *Imperii* Collega factus fuerit. Verùm hic Error excuſatione dignus; cùm *prior Epocha Tiberiani Imperii valde ſit obſcura*; ſed uterque inexcuſabilis eſſet, ſi, ut vult *Petavius*, Baptiſmum Chriſti in Annum ejuſdem Æræ XLII contuliſſet; cùm *Tiberius* jam ab Anno XXXVII. fato functus eſſet. vid. *Ant. Pagi* Diſſert. de Periodo Græc. Rom. p. 13.

*A.* His Name is *Ant. Pagi*, one of the greateſt *Chronologers* of the laſt Age: He held a Correſpondence with the late famous Mr. *Dodwell*, and ſeveral other learned Men of this Nation; refuſed being a *Jeſuit*, though educated amongſt them, and became a *Franciſcan* at *Arles* 1641, chiefly by the Perſuaſion of an Uncle, who was at the Head of that *Order* in *France*. His *illuſtrating* a curious Piece of *Roman* Antiquity, namely, an *Inſcription* on the Pillar of *Aurelian* the Emperor, and from thence making many ſingular Obſervations relating to the *Cæſarian Conſulſhips*, gained him Applauſe all over the learned Word: But the great *Work* of all, is his *Critical, Hiſtorical, and Chronological* Remarks on *Baronius's Annals:* There you have a vaſt Treaſure of *Profane* and *Eccleſiaſtical* Hiſtory both; and it is from this Work I am now going to give you the Satisfaction I propoſed, about theſe *different* Supputations, in Relation to the *Death* of Chriſt.

The ancient *Fathers*, * ſays he, St. *Auſtin*, St. *Jerom*, and others, place the *Paſſion* of *Chriſt* our Lord, when the two *Gemini* were *Conſuls*, in the XXIX Year of the *Chriſtian Æra*. *Euſebius* was one of the firſt that *altered* this Supputation, being afterwards followed by *Epiphanius* † and others. The Way being thus paved, ſome fixed the Time of our Saviour's Paſſion

* R. P. Ant. *Pagi* Critica. Hiſtor. Chronol. in Annales *Baronii*, &c. Vol. I. Par. 1689. p. 23, &c.

† Hær. 51.

Paſſion to XXXIſt, ſome to the XXXIId Year of the Chriſtian *Æra*. The Opinion of *Euſebius* and *Epiphanius* in this Matter, which is, that *Chriſt* was crucified in the XXXIſt Year, has been maintained by *Petavius* at large *. In the 12th Chapter, having firſt taken Notice that the *Ancient* Fathers thought that Chriſt died the 15th of *Tiberius*, aged 30. he ſays thus, *Others ſince, following* Euſebius *and* Epiphanius, *have placed his Death about the* 18th *of* Tiberius: *But then many, I obſerve, don't attend to the* Meaning *of this later Opinion; imagining that the* Years *of that Emperor are to be computed, after the* Roman *Manner, from the Day that he began his Reign; which is not right: For thoſe Fathers began their Supputation from the Autumn preceding the Summer, in which* Auguſtus *died.* *Euſebius*'s Opinion in his *Chronicle* appears to have been, that Chriſt ſuffered in the 18th of *Tiberius*, and XXXIſt of the Chriſtian *Æra*; and yet, in Reality, it was only the 17th of *Tiberius*, as *Euſebius* himſelf afterwards acknowledged in his *Hiſtory*: For there he makes *Auguſtus* reigning *fifty ſeven* Years, and ſuppoſes his Death to have been in the 14th of the *Dionyſian Æra*. *Euſebius* then in his *Chronicle* ſpeaks differently concerning *Chriſt*'s *Death*, from what he does in his Hiſtory; and therefore his firſt Opinion, which was, that *Auguſtus* died in the 13th Year of the Chriſtian *Æra*, he rejected as falſe. Some Perſons *erring* with *Euſebius* in

* De Doctr. Temp. Lib. 12.

in his *Chroniele*, have accordingly fixed *Chriſt*'s Paſſion to the XXXIſt Year of *our Æra*, whilſt others following the right Chronology, have join'd the 18th of *Tiberius* with the XXXIId Year of the Chriſtian *Æra*, and in *that* Year have placed the Death of Chriſt. This is *Euſebius*'s Opinion both in his *Hiſtory* *, and in his *Demonſtration*, &c. declaring in thoſe Places, that the *Time* of our Lord's Preaching was *three Years and a half*. Wherefore, ſince *Euſebius* writes, that Chriſt was baptized in the 15th of *Tiberius*, namely, in the XXIXth Year of the Vulgar *Æra*; it is plain, that, according to this *ſecond* Opinion, he aſcribes to Chriſt *four Paſſovers*, though, according to the former, *three* only. So that *Euſebius* has been wavering in this Point, about ſettling the Time of Chriſt's Death.

*B.* I now begin to have a much better Notion of this *intricate* Affair. I do not wonder that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has ſo induſtriouſly kept his Reader in the Dark about it; for ſhould he have adjuſted theſe *ſeeming* Differences in Chronology, he knew his whole Scheme muſt have been deſtroy'd. But is this pardonable in an Author, that reminds † his Reader, of *having writ an Eſſay on the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion*, and of having preſcribed *a proper Method of proceeding in the Argument againſt ſerious Infidels?* Surely this could be no more a *proper*

* *Hiſt.* Lib. 1. Cap. 10 De *Demonſtr.* Lib. 10.
† Page 5.

a *proper Method* of convincing Dr. *Clarke*, than the *Kepler Hypotheſis* was: And, I dare ſay, every *Infidel* in the Kingdom will thank him for *ſuch a Method of proceeding againſt them.* He throws out a very odd *Innuendo* * concerning *Irenæus*, as willing to expoſe him in Point of *Chronology* about the *Time* of our Saviour's Death. The Opinion (as charged on *Irenæus*) is monſtrous, if true; and yet our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has not ſaid one Word in Vindication of that venerable *Father*. I could be glad to have this Matter cleared up.

*A.* The ſame Writer, that we are now engaged with, will clear it up, I doubt not, to your entire Satisfaction. The Opinion charged upon *Irenæus* is, that *Chriſt preached the Goſpel from the fortieth to the fiftieth Year.* Now *Pagi*, in ſtating this Matter, firſt lays before his Reader the plain Words of *Irenæus*, and thence fixing the *Time* of Chriſt's Baptiſm: *Our Lord*, ſays *Irenæus* †, *was born about the* FORTY FIRST *Year of the Reign of* Auguſtus; which if he computed from the Death of *Caius Julius*, (as it ought not to be queſtioned but he did,) it is manifeſt, that he *ſettled* the Birth of Chriſt in the XLIſt of the *Julian* Year. And ſince he declares in another ||, that *Chriſt* came to his Baptiſm, when he began to be *about thirty Years of Age*, *i. e. entring* upon his *thirtieth* Year; (as

* Page 97.

† Lib. 3. Cap. 25.

|| Lib. 2. 39. tanquam triginta annorum.

(as is plain from his own Words;) and adds, moreover, that *Chriſt* kept *three* Paſſovers; it neceſſarily follows, that *Irenæus* underſtood the 15th of *Tiberius*, mentioned by St. *Luke*, as of the 15th Year from the Time of *Tiberius*'s *Proconſular* Government; otherwiſe he would contradict himſelf, as well as the Goſpel. The Opinion then of this pious Doctor of the Chriſtian Church was, that, in the XXVth Year of the Chriſtian *Æra*, *the Word of the Lord came unto* John the Baptiſt, the 15th Year of the *Proconſular* Government of *Tiberius* being near at an End; that *John* continued his Miniſtry to the Beginning of the XXVIIth of the Chriſtian *Æra*, or thereabouts, *Chriſt* being baptized by him, when he began to be *thirty* Years of Age; and that *Chriſt*'s *three* Paſſovers were held in the Years XXVII, XXVIII, and XXIX, of the Chriſtian *Æra*; in the laſt of which Years, and on the 25th Day of *March*, *Irenæus* believed that *Chriſt* was crucified. For it is not to be imagined, that he either differ'd from the reſt of the Writers of that Time, as to the Year and Day of our Saviour's Paſſion, or that he was ignorant, how that the Years of *Tiberius* had been computed from the Time of his *Proconſular* Government. For at the Time that *Marcus Aurelius*, who had been his *Copartner*, was in the Adminiſtration of the *Roman* Affairs, *Irenæus* was ſent into the Country of *Lions* in *France*, to preach the Goſpel.

Now, from what has appeared above to be the *ſettled* Opinion of *Irenæus*, it is fairly to be

concluded, that the following Words, which we read in his Works, * *viz. That Chriſt preached the Goſpel from* the fortieth *to the* fiftieth *Year*, are *corrupted* or foiſted in; not only becauſe *they* are contrary to the Points before *ſettled* by *Irenæus*, touching the Birth and Baptiſm of Chriſt, and the three Paſſovers, but alſo becauſe it would thence follow, that Chriſt ſuffer'd, in *Irenæus*'s Opinion, after that *Tiberius* was dead himſelf, and after that *Pontius Pilate* had quitted *Judæa*; which are Things I can by no Means believe, could ever enter into the Head of *Irenæus*. The Deſign of *Irenæus*'s Reaſoning in the Manner, as has been above taken notice of, was to ſhew the *Error* of thoſe who ſaid, † that Chriſt preached only *one* Year after his Baptiſm, and that he ſuffered when *thirty Years* of Age.

*B.* You have given me the Satisfaction I wiſhed for: And I think our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s Conduct, in this Affair, ſhould make him bluſh. His *Way* of uſhering in this *Aſperſion* upon *Irenæus*, is likewiſe as remarkable as the Thing itſelf: For he would have his Reader to believe, that it was a wild Imagination in *Euſebius*, *Jerom*, and *Philoponus*, as it was in *Irenæus*, to talk and write as they did about the *Time* of our Saviour's Death. I ſee, by what you have already obſerved from *Pagi*, how it came about, that *Euſebius* and others left

* Cap. 29, & 30.

† See my *Note* (from Dr. *Grabe*) upon this Paſſage of *Irenæus*, in a Book lately tranſlated from the *Latin* of Dr. *Whitaker* (*Regius Profeſſor* in *Cambridge*) called a *ſeaſonable* Preſervative againſt *Popiſh Deluſions*. p. 123, 124.

left the antient Way of computing in this Matter; that both Ways ſtand on a ſure Foundation; and that the *different* Calculations, on Account of *Proconſular* and *Monarchical* Adminiſtration, are eaſily reconciled; no ways contrary to St. *Luke*'s Chronology: And I believe, that Way of computing of the *Antients* before *Euſebius*'s Time, may ſerve to direct us, in ſettling the *true* Reading of this Paſſage of *Phlegon*. I am pleaſed to ſee this Juſtice done to *Irenæus*; and your learned *Franciſcan* now lets the *Engliſh* Reader plainly ſee, that *Euſebius* and *Jerom* had a *Rule* to go by, and were not guided by *Fancy*, in fixing the *Year* for the Death of *Chriſt*. I do not doubt, but *Philoponus* acted accordingly.

*A.* Sir, *Philoponus* will appear preſently a very ſtrong Evidence againſt our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*. You obſerve, that no leſs than *four* very eminent Writers meet with very rough Treatment, all in a *Breath*, as we ſay. 'Tis an *extraordinary* Paragraph, indeed; and ſince it is upon the *Tapis*, pleaſe to read it, and then, perhaps, I may make ſome Obſervations upon *it*, that may give you further Satisfaction.

*B.* Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s Paragraph runs thus; * " If it be asked, How *Euſebius*, or " *Jerom*, or *Philoponus*, came to cite it ſo " many Years *later*, if it ſtood in *Phlegon*, " where I conceive it ſtood? I anſwer, That " theſe Men, from the Authority of *Africanus*, " *took for granted*, that *Phlegon* had ſpoke con-

* Page 97.



" cerning

" cerning the *Darkneſs* at the Death of Chriſt;
" and then, whatever Year they fixed for the
" Death of *Chriſt*, whether the ſecond, or third,
" or fourth Year of that Olympiad, *they quoted*
" Phlegon's *Teſtimony ſtill as to their Purpoſe*;
" *and ſo they might have done, had they ſuppoſed*
" our Saviour to have lived as long as *Irenæus*
" ſuppoſed him to live. But this I ſubmit, as
" a mere *Conjecture*, to the Judgment of the *un-*
" *biaſſed* Reader."

*A.* I hope, our *former Enquiries* were ſuch, as ſufficiently diſcharge us of *Partiality* in this Affair of *Phlegon*: But what Room can there be for *Conjecture* in this Matter, as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* puts it? Why muſt *Euſebius*, *Jerom*, and *Philoponus*, be ſuppoſed to take a Thing *for granted*, when they had *Phlegon*'s Works extant amongſt them, whence they might have the ſame Satisfaction as *Africanus* had? *Africanus*, you ſee, *gloſſes* upon the *ſupernatural* Darkneſs; and therefore we are not to wonder, that we learn ſomething *more* from him concerning this Teſtimony of *Phlegon*, than from others, who have choſe to be *conciſer* in their Relations. But why (I ſay) muſt *Euſebius*, and *Jerom* be thought Strangers to *Phlegon*'s Works, when they had them to conſult as well as *Africanus*, and need not *take Things for granted* upon his Authority? They knew by their *own* Calculations, that *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe muſt relate to the *Darkneſs* at Chriſt's Death; and yet they knew withal, though they *reformed*,

in

in ſettling the *Chriſtian Æra* in another Manner than *Africanus* and other Writers before them had done, that theſe *Calculations* of theirs did in *Reality* agree with the former, though there is *ſeemingly* a very great *Difference*. As to *Philoponus*, though he lived long after *Euſebius* and *Jerom*, yet undoubtedly he ſaw *Phlegon*'s Works; and his *Evidence* is very ſtrong; which I will produce preſently, and give you my Thoughts upon it. I will only firſt obſerve, that our learned *Franciſcan* was once of an Opinion, that this *Evidence* was not *ſuch*; that *Philoponus*, in what he has ſaid about *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, had it not from *Phlegon* himſelf, but from ſome other Writers; for that he believed *Phlegon*'s Works were not then *extant*: And that beſides, there appeared an *Inconſiſtency* in what *Philoponus* ſays about the Matter; as firſt quoting *Phlegon* ſaying in the *ſecond Year, and afterwards the fourth Year of the* CCIId *Olympiad*. But as to *Phlegon*'s Works being *then* periſhed, as he thought, *Pagi* lived ſo ſee his *Error*, and has honeſtly corrected *it* in his *Addenda* * thus: "The Collection of "*Olympiads*, or the *Chronicle* publiſhed by "*Phlegon Trallianus*, was *ſtill extant* in the "*ninth* Century; when *Photius*, in his *Bib-* "*liotheque Cod.* 97, affirms, that he had read "five of his Books; and *Photius* has made "ſome Extracts from that Collection: There- "fore *Philoponus*, who lived long before *Pho-* "*tius*

* Vol. I, inter Add. p. 302. Ed. Par. 1689.

" *tius*, may be allowed to have ſeen that " Collection of *Phlegon*'s."

*B.* I obſerve, *Pagi* ſays that *Philoponus* lived *long before* Photius. Pray *when* was it that he lived? and who was this *Philoponus*?

*A.* You may gueſs from his *Name*, that *Buſineſs was his Delight*; and therefore was entitled to the *Motto* that a learned *Peer* now ſo juſtly takes to himſelf. *Philoponus* flouriſhed at the latter End of the *ſixth* Century; was a *Grammarian* of *Alexandria*; He writ ſeveral *philoſophical* Pieces, beſides his Defence of *Moſes*'s Account of the Creation; alſo a Treatiſe upon the *Paſſover*: Among the Pieces that are loſt, I am particularly concerned for *that* which he wrote againſt *Proclus*: I may, perhaps, give you my Reaſons for it ſome other Time. He indulged himſelf ſo much in the Philoſophy of *Plato* and *Ariſtotle*, that the *Divine* was often *loſt* in ſome *heretical* Opinion, or other, that he maintained; which *Tertullian* (ſays Dr. *Cave*) rightly obſerved, long before, had been the Fate of ſome Philoſophers. And now I will read to you what *Philoponus* ſays upon the Matter in hand; and afterwards make the beſt uſe of it I can for the preſent Purpoſe. You ſee *Pere Pagi* has cleared up *one* Difficulty; and I hope to do the ſame by the *other*. You are now to hear *Philoponus* ſpeaking to you, after having converſed (we may reaſonably conclude) with *Phlegon* himſelf: I will read to you from Mr. *Whiſton*'s Collection; for he has been very

very careful in making *it*: And as to this Paſſage out of *Philoponus*, you may depend on the *Tranſlation*, in the Main, as *juſt*. There is one Miſtake, which is the Printer's Fault; though I do not find it amongſt the *Errata* neither. It is reading CXVIII. inſtead of the CXCVIIIth Olympiad, as it ought to be. *Philoponus* then thus * ſpeaks to the Matter in hand. " *Phlegon* alſo, in his Olympiads, makes men-
" tion of this Darkneſs, or rather of this Night:
" For he ſays, that in the *ſecond Year* of the
" CCIId Olympiad, there was the greateſt E-
" cliplſe of the Sun, which had been known
" before; And Night came on at the ſixth
" Hour of the Day; inſomuch that the Stars
" appeared in the Sky. Now, that *Phlegon*
" alſo makes mention of *that Eclipſe* of the Sun,
" which happened at the *Crucifixion* of Chriſt
" *(our Lord,)* and not *of any other*, is manifeſt:
" Firſt, becauſe he ſays, *no ſuch Eclipſe* † had
" been known in former || Times; for there is
" but one *natural* Way of every Eclipſe of
" the Sun. For the uſual Eclipſes of the Sun
" happen only at the Conjunction of the two
" Luminaries; but *that* at the Death ** of
" Chriſt

* *Philoponus de* Creatione II. 21. *p.* 88, 89.

† Μὴ ἐγνῶσθαι τὴν τοιαύτην ἔκλειψιν, is *Philoponus*'s Gloſs upon *Phlegon*'s ἔκλειψις μεγίςη.

|| The Eclipſe of the Sun, that *Xerxes* ſaw, (as mentioned by *Herodotus*,) was certainly not a *natural* one; notwithſtanding *Phlegon* points out his Eclipſe, as having had nothing like it, no *ſuch Eclipſe* before.

** Ἐπὶ τῷ Δεσπότῃ χριςῷ. Supplendum quod ſupra, ἐν τῷ ςαυρῷ.

" Chriſt *(our Lord)* happened at the *Full-Moon*;
" which, in a natural Way, is impoſſible. And
" in other Eclipſes of the Sun, although the
" whole Sun be eclipſed, it continues without
" Light but a very ſmall Portion of Time; and
" at the ſame Time begins preſently to clear
" itſelf again: But at the Death * of *(our Lord)*
" Chriſt, the Air continued entirely without
" Light, from the ſixth Hour to the ninth.
" The ſame Thing is proved alſo from the Hiſto-
" ry of *(Tiberius)* *Cæſar*: For *Phlegon* ſays, he
" began to reign on the ſecond Year of the 198th
" Olympiad; but that the Eclipſe happened
" in the *fourth* Year of the CCIId Olympiad.
" So that if we compute from the Beginning
" of the Reign of *Tiberius*, unto the fourth
" Year of the CCIId Olimpiad, there are pretty
" † near 19 Years, *i. e. three* of the CXCVIIIth
" Olympiad, and *ſixteen* of the other *four*.
" *This is the Account given us by St.* Luke *in*
" *the Goſpel*; *for he ſays*, *in the* 15*th Year of*
" Tiberius Cæſar's *Government*, John the Bap-
" tiſt *began to preach*, *when our Saviour's Mi-*
" *niſtry commenced*; *but* that *did not laſt full*
" *four Years*, *as* Euſebius *has ſhewn in his firſt*
" *Book of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, *deducing it from*
" Joſephus's *Antiquities*. *For the Time Beginning*
" *under* Annas *the High-Prieſt*, *(which was an*
" *annual Office,) and three other High-Prieſts*
" *having ſucceeded him*, *it expired at the*
" BEGIN-

* Τῆ Δεσπότη χριςῷ. Supplendum ut antea ἐν τῷ ςαυρῷ.
† Ἐγγὺς τῆ Ἔτη δεκα ϗ ἐννέα.

" Beginning *of* Cajaphas's *ſucceeding them in* " *that Office, Chriſt being crucified: But that* " *Year was the* 19*th of* Tiberius Cæſar's " *Government.*" Why Mr. *W.* left out this latter Part of *Philoponus*, I know not: But ſo I find it, *Ed. Vien.* 1630. And now pleaſe to take my Obſervations upon this remarkable Paſſage of *Philoponus*.

*B.* Before you make your Obſervations, excuſe me, if I ask you, why Mr. *Whiſton* leaves out the Word *Lord* (as applied to Chriſt in the Original) no leſs than *three* Times in this Tranſlation of his?

*A.* You are ſenſible the *Argument*, we are upon, does not ſuffer at all by ſuch an *Omiſſion*; and therefore Mr. *W.* might think, there was no Neceſſity for taking notice of *it*. But I muſt not diſſemble with you: I rather think, the original Word Δεσπότης was paſſed over, as being diſagreeable to that Gentleman's Way of Thinking about the *Divinity* of our bleſſed Saviour. It is a very ſignificant *Word*; is often applied by the Antients *emphatically* to Chriſt; and ſome other Time, if you pleaſe, you ſhall hear what *Concluſions* I have to draw from the primitive Uſe of that *Word*. But now, to proceed in making ſome *Remarks* upon this Paſſage of *Philoponus*. --- You may obſerve, in the firſt Place, that he aſſigns *two Reaſons* why *Phlegon* cannot be underſtood ſpeaking of *any other* Eclipſe than *that* which happened at our Saviour's Crucifixion. The *firſt Reaſon* is

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founded upon the Deſcription of a *ſupernatural* Eclipſe, which he underſtands to be *plainly* implied in *Phlegon*'s Words, as others do; notwithſtanding the *Opiniâtreté* of our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*. Though there had been ſeveral *total* Eclipſes, which *Philoponus* was able to give an Account of; and, ſome not in a *natural* Way, that he could give no Account of; yet here, according to *Phlegon*, ſays he, *no* SUCH ECLIPSE *was ever known in former* * *Times*. And indeed, as Mr. *W.* has juſtly obſerved already, † what elſe can well be the Meaning of *Phlegon*'s Words ἔκλειψις μεγίστη, the *greateſt Eclipſe*, if you do not underſtand *them* as relating to its *Duration*? "The *Greatneſs*, ſays he, in ſolar Eclipſes "that are total, is chiefly ſeen in the *Length of* "*their Duration.*" Had it then been a *natural* Eclipſe that *Phlegon* ſpeaks of, or ſuch a one, where the *total Darkneſs* very rarely laſts longer than *five Minutes*; can we think *Philoponus* would have put ſuch a Conſtruction upon *Phlegon*'s Words, and applied them in the Manner as he has done? His *ſecond Reaſon* aſſigned (you take Notice) is founded upon a Supputation of Years, which *Phlegon*, it ſeems, had made himſelf. *Phlegon ſays* (φησιν ὁ Φλέγων) *that* (Tiberius) Cæſar *began to reign on the ſecond Year of the* CXCVIIIth *Olympiad*; *but that the Eclipſe happened in the fourth Year of the* CCIId *Olympiad*. Here we meet with a *new*

* Μὴ ἐγνῶσθαι τὴν τ ειαύτην ἔκλειψιν.
† Page 47.

*new* Quotation, and a very material one from *Phlegon*; and our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* will be hard put to it, to ſhew whence *Philoponus* had this Paſſage, if not from *Phlegon* himſelf. The *Premiſes* then are *Phlegon's*: *Philoponus* alſo makes his Computation from theſe Premiſes, and finds that the 19th Year of *Tiberius*, or thereabouts, (in which our Saviour ſuffered) correſponds with *Phlegon's* ſecond Year of the CXCVIIIth Olympiad, when *Tiberius* (*Phlegon* ſays) began to reign. Such concluding from *Phlegon*, and ſuch a particular Calculation made by *Philoponus*, is to me an undoubted Argument (as in the Caſe of *Irenæus* above) that *the* ſecond *Year of the* CCIId *Olimpiad*, as appears in our printed Copies of *Philoponus*, in the former Part of this Quotation, muſt be a *Miſtake*; and not hard to be accounted for neither: For what is more eaſy or natural to be ſuppoſed, than that one *Part* of the Numeral [V] might, by Length of Time, be effaced and gone, and the haſty Tranſcriber, inſtead of IV, write II? I have another Reaſon for thinking this was the Caſe; becauſe *Corderius* the *Jeſuit* (who publiſhed it from the *Cæſarian* Library) tells his Reader, that he did tranſcribe it from a *very ancient MS.* and poſſibly did not do it with that Care and Attention, as it ought to have been done: For he lets his Reader know likewiſe, that it was done at his *leaſure Hours* *

 However,

* Hujus ergo pulcherrimi Tractatus *Antiquiſſimum Exemplar Græcum MS.* ex Sac. Cæſ. Majeſtatis Bibliotheca, Nactus, &c. Horis, uti ſoleo, *ſubciſivis*, αυτοχειρι deſcripſi, &c.

However, this is ſtill ſubmitted only as a *Conjecture*; and there is no need of troubling our Heads in accounting for it: For a *Conſiſtency* ought to be allowed, when *Philoponus*'s *Narrative* and *argumentative* Part are compared together; unleſs we can ſuppoſe *Philoponus* to have been ſo very *weak*, as to make *Deductions*, when he had juſt before deſtroyed the very *Foundation* for making them. I would now obſerve farther upon this Quotation of *Philoponus* from *Phlegon*, that *Phlegon*, as a *Grecian*, did not fix the Time of this Eclipſe after the *Roman* Manner of computing; or as *Tertullian* and others generally did compute, till the Days of *Euſebius*, already taken notice of: But it is plain *Phlegon* computed as *Euſebius* after him did. And though our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* would have it thought, * that *Euſebius*, *Jerom*, and *Philoponus*, fixed the Death of Chriſt at *random*, or according to Fancy; yet ſurely it is highly reaſonable to believe, that *Euſebius* and *Jerom* had their Computation in this Matter from *Phlegon*'s Works, as well as *Philoponus* had; though they do not quote *the Paſſage* that he does. I would obſerve farther, that the different Supputations, on Account of *proconſular* and *monarchical* Government, being ſo well underſtood at *Rome*, it was not material after which Manner *Tertullian* and others addreſſed themſelves to their Enemies, in relation to the Eclipſe

* Page 97.

Eclipſe at our Saviour's Paſſion. Had *Euſebius* been contemporary with *Tertullian*, their different Supputations would not have occaſioned any ſuch Surprize then, as it does now. There were different *Æra's*, but then, all Things conſidered, there was ſtill a Correſpondence of particular Years. *Origen* would never have quoted *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, as relating to our Saviour's Paſſion, if he thought *Celſus* had had it in his Power to diſprove him in Point of Chronology; and *Tertullian* muſt have been a Mad-Man in *appealing* to the *Archives* about this Matter, if he had not been thoroughly ſatisfied, that there was an Agreement, or Adjuſtment in Chronology; and yet their Chronological Tables might be made uſe of in a different Manner. So that "when *Tertullian*, "*Origen*, *Julius Africanus*, *Auſtin*, and *Jerom*, "(ſays *Pagi* *) do inculcate the Eclipſe at our "Saviour's Paſſion, upon the Authority of "*Phlegon*; it is very evident, though they had "different Supputations, that they all fixed "upon the *ſame Year* of our Saviour's ſuffering, "as *Phlegon* had fixed his Eclipſe. For, "ſays he, if *they* had ſettled the *Time* of Chriſt's "Paſſion, otherwiſe than *Phlegon* had ſettled "the Eclipſe, they would have been ſo far "from effecting what they intended, which "was to perſuade the *Gentiles* concerning the "*miraculous* Death of *Chriſt*, that they would "have been made a Jeſt of, and had in the "utmoſt

* Crit. Hiſt. p. 27. Ed. Par.

" utmoſt Contempt by thoſe they were talking " to upon this Matter." There is one Thing, however, (as *Pagi* obſerves *) that made theſe *Supputations*, in general, difficult and abſtruſe, amongſt the *Ancients* themſelves; and *that* was, a *different* Way of computing, even in the *Olympiadique* Way. *Pagi* in clearing up the Difficulty, in relation to *Phlegon's* Olympiad, obſerves, that *Africanus* ſometimes ſays, that the Eclipſe happened the *ſecond Year*, at other Times in the *fourth Year* of the CCIId Olympiad; then takes notice how *Euſebius* varied after this Manner; and how unſucceſsful *Kepler* and *Petavius* have been in accounting for theſe Difficulties; for they ſuppoſed, that the *Year* in *Euſebius's* Chronicle was *corrupted*. But the Fault, ſays *Pagi*, or Miſtake, is not couched under the *Year*, but under the *Olympiad*: And, to illuſtrate this Matter, he inſtances in *Africanus*, and ſhews both from the Fragment, and from *Syncellus* too, that *Africanus* muſt be underſtood of a *different* Computation, even as to the *Olympiads*. " *Africanus*, ſays he, it being a " weighty Affair, and of great Conſequence " (*viz.* *Phlegon's* Teſtimony) that all Perſons " might underſtand him, made uſe of *both* " *Ways* of reckoning the *Olympiads*; and, " whereas in the *common Way* then, the Com- " putation was the fourth Year of the CCIſt " Olympiad, *Africanus* made uſe of that like- " wiſe; writing the *fourth* Year of the *two hun-*

" *dred*

* Pag. 27, 28. Crit. Hiſt.

" *dred and first*, and not of the *two hundred and* " *second Olympiad.* * "

*B.* Sir, I am extremely thankful for the Light you have given me into this intricate Affair. If you think it now a proper Time, *Tertullian* alſo having of late been often named, I ſhould be glad you would enter into a farther Defence of *him* and *Juſtin Martyr* too, againſt the *rough Treatment* they have met with from our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*. You have now done them and the reſt of the *Fathers* ſufficient Juſtice, (I dare ſay, in the Opinion of every unbiaſſed Perſon,) as to their *ſeeming Differences* in Chronology about the Death of Chriſt, and in regard to *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony. But this Writer ſeems more particularly bent to *depreciate* theſe two great Lights of the Chriſtian Church, becauſe they talk of *Acts* of *Pontius Pilate*, the *Roman Archives*, and many *Teſtimonies* that are produced from them.

*A.* I think the *Time* very proper for doing what you deſire. If I miſtake not, it is our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s main Deſign to have the *Credit* of thoſe *two Antenicene Fathers* brought as *low* as poſſible; and that for ſome other Reaſons perhaps, beſides thoſe you have now given. Some Enquiry may probably be made into that Affair by-and-by. As to *any Acts* of *Pontius Pilate*, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* cannot bear the Thoughts of

* *Africanus*, ut in *Re graviſſima* ab omnibus intelligeretur, *utramque* Olympiades ſupputandi rationem uſurpavit; cumque Annus tunc quartus ducenteſimæ primæ Olympiadis *communis curreret*, eam etiam numerationem amplexus eſt, ſcripſitque, &c.

of them. " The Truth is, ſays * he, theſe " *early Acts* of *Pilate* ſeem plainly to be " *forged*. Who were the Authors of them I " know not (ſays he). He allows, it is *poſſible* that " *Pilate* might give an Account to *Tiberius* of " the *Death* of Chriſt." If ſo, What *Name* are we to give to *this Account* ſent to *Tiberius*? Are not the Things contained in that Account to be reckoned amongſt the *Acts* of *Pilate*? And why then are all the Acts of *Pilate* to be ſuppoſed *forged*? That the Heathens did *forge* ſome, and that the later Chriſtians did *forge* others, ſhall not be diſputed with him: But what then? Muſt theſe *early Acts* therefore *ſeem to be plainly forged?* No; but *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian* (our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſays) have related ſo many incredible Things from theſe *Acts* of *Pilate*, that *therefore* theſe *early Acts of* Pilate *ſeem plainly to be forged*: The plain *Engliſh* of which is, that *Juſtin Martyr*, and *Tertullian* were the Perſons that tranſmitted, if not guilty of *Forgery* themſelves, in this reſpect, by impoſing upon the World Things that never were amongſt the *Acts* of *Pilate*; and if they were *Impoſtors* in relating theſe Things, why (ſay the World) may *they* not be ſuſpected of having been *Impoſtors* in the Relation of other Matters too? " That *Pilate* " wrote † the Things (ſays he) which *Tertul-* " *lian ſays* he wrote; or that the Things, for " which *Juſtin Martyr* Appeals to the *Acts* of " *Pilate, were ever ſent* to *Tiberius*, has *no Founda-*

" *tion*

* Pag. 37, 46.
† Page 37.

" *tion* of Probability. Could *Pilate* (ſays he) " poſſibly ſay ſome of the Things * which *Ter-* " *tullian* PUTS upon him? Or would *Pilate* " mention ſuch a Circumſtance, as the Soldiers " *caſting Lots for the Garments* of our Lord, for " which *Juſtin* appeals to *theſe Acts?*" However, after this, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* reſolves the Whole into the Folly and *Weakneſs* of theſe two learned, judicious, and pious *Fathers* of the Chriſtian Church. He now ſuppoſes *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian* not PUTTING Things upon *Pilate*, or deſignedly impoſing them upon others: But he would have it underſtood and believed, that their *Zeal* wanted *Knowledge*; and that theſe early *Acts* of *Pilate*, out of which they preached to Emperors, Senate, and People, were already *forged* to their Hands. " It ſeems there- " fore (ſays he) † much the moſt natural to " ſuppoſe, that theſe *Acts of Pilate* came out " of the *ſame Mint*, which ſome other early " *Forgeries* did; and were *miſtaken* by *theſe* " *good Men*, (Juſtin Martyr *and* Tertullian,) and " quoted as *genuine*, juſt as *they* did SOME OTHER " THINGS, which ſeem'd to make ſo ſtrongly " for THEIR *Cauſe.*"

*B.* This Way of Talking in our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, is to me very ſhocking; and looks, as if he had a deeper Deſign laid, than weak'ning this Teſtimony of *Phlegon* only. What thoſe *ſome other Things are*, which he ſays thoſe *Fathers* quoted



* Page 39.
† Ibid.

as *genuine*, and were *not* ſo, we are yet in the Dark about it; for he has not explain'd himſelf: But till he does, he muſt excuſe me, if, upon ſo vile a Suggeſtion, I think that he is ſtriking at ſome of the *Fundamentals* of Chriſtianity; at leaſt, that an *Engliſh* Reader has a Handle given him for thinking ſo. What was the CAUSE, that theſe two *great Men* pleaded for? Was it not our *common Chriſtianity?* And does our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* call *it* THEIR *Cauſe*, as if he had no Share or Concern in *it* himſelf? Was it true, that *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian* wanted either *Veracity* or good *Senſe*, (which this Writer would fain rob 'em of,) yet the Chriſtian Religion did not want ſuch *Supporters*, as ſhould have Recourſe to *ſpurious* Quotations. I own, Sir, I think your Defence of theſe *Fathers* to be abſolutely neceſſary, as to theſe *Acts* of *Pilate*: But pray, in the firſt place, let me have ſome Account of theſe *Acts* themſelves; for I want to be better inform'd in that Particular.

*A.* Biſhop *Pearſon*, I think, has given a ſuccinct and faithful Account of this Matter, and produces all the Authority that any *reaſonable* Man can deſire, to ſupport the *Genuineſs* of theſe *early Acts* of *Pilate*; and yet I cannot promiſe you, ſhould we allow our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* to be a *reaſonable* Man, that this Account of Biſhop *Pearſon*'s will have any Weight with him. However, the *Account* ſtands thus *: "To the Be-

"ginning

* *Pearſonii* Lectiones in Acta Apoſtolorum. Lect. III. IV.

" ginning of this Year, (*A. D.* 34.) ſeems chiefly
" to be referred what we find related of *Pontius*
" *Pilate*; not in the *Scriptures*, but by the an-
" cient Writers of the Chriſtian Church. For
" as *Acts* and *Journals* of Things that happen'd
" were ſent to, and kept at *Rome*, ſo the ſame
" Thing was done by the Governors of the ſeve-
" ral *Roman* Provinces; who were continually
" writing to their Maſters the Emperors, if any
" Thing of *Moment* offer'd itſelf: Which makes
" *Euſebius* obſerve, that it * *was an old Cuſtom*
" *among the Heathen Governors to ſignify to the*
" *Emperor, whatever was new or extraordinary.*
" *Pontius Pilate* therefore is accordingly repre-
" ſented, as having made it his Buſineſs to enter
" and keep ſuch *Acts* and *Journals*, and parti-
" cularly to have ſent a Letter to *Tiberius* con-
" cerning Chriſt. *Juſtin Martyr* is clear and
" diſtinct in his ſpeaking of *theſe Acts*, in the
" Apology that he wrote to the *Roman* Em-
" peror; for he *appeals* to *them*, when he ſays,
" *And that theſe Things were done, ye may learn*
" *from the* Acts *under* Pontius Pilate. So *Ter-*
" *tullian*, in his Apology †, *All theſe Things*
" *concerning Chriſt*, Pilate, *in his Heart a Chri-*
" *ſtian, then acquainted* Tiberius *with.* So a-
" gain, *Juſtin Martyr*, in the ſame Apology,
" *That he* (Chriſt) *did theſe Things, ye may learn*

 " *from*

* Παλαιὸν κεκρατηκότος ἔθος, &c. *Euſeb.* Hiſt. L. 2. C. 2.
† Cap. 21. Ea omnia ſuper Chriſto, &c.

" *from the* Acts * *under* Pontius Pilate. *Iſaac*
" *Caſaubon* has rightly remark'd upon this Paſ-
" ſage, that the *Greek* Word ἀνὶῶ † ſhould be
" read ἄκλων. *Euſebius* likewiſe ſays, *The Things*
" *concerning the Reſurrection of our Saviour Je-*
" *ſus Chriſt from the Dead, having already been*
" *noiſed about throughout all the Land of* Pa-
" leſtine, *are* communicated *by* Pilate *to the Em-*
" *peror* Tiberius. *Hegeſippus*, that ſeems to have
" been a Writer in the 4th or 5th Century,
" lays before his Reader the very Letter that
" *Pilate* ſent: But 'tis unqueſtionably a *fictitious*
" one; and ſome lewd, idle-headed Chriſtians,
" or rather Hereticks, have counterfeited theſe
" *Acts*; ſuch as the *Quarta-decimans*, or *Four-*
" *teen-Day Paſſover-Men*, made their Brags of;
" or ſuch as *Epiphanius* deſcribes in his 50th
" Hereſy; or what is taken notice of in the 8th
" Homily on *Eaſter*, aſcribed to St. *Chryſoſtom.*
" But as to the Books, or Collection of Acts;
" *Epiphanius* obſerves them to have *varied* in
" his Time. But beſides *theſe*, there were other
" *counterfeit*

* ἐκλῶν ἐπι Ποντίου Πιλάτου γενομένων ἀνὶῶ μαθεῖν δυνασθε.

† Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s Reaſoning upon this Matter is admirable; becauſe *Juſtin Martyr* appeals to *Acts* UNDER *Pontius Pilate*, therefore it does not appear, that *theſe* were the *Acts* OF *Pontius Pilate*, or that he had any Thing to do in ſending an Account of ſuch Matters to *Tiberius*. " Some very good Criticks, (p. 35.)
" ſays he, have here changed ἀνὶῶ into ἄκλων; i. e. *you may learn*
" *from the* Acts *done* under *Pontius Pilate*: But read it either Way,
" it makes no great Matter; for *Juſtin Martyr* does not ſay, that
" Pilate *wrote* or *ſent* any Account of *theſe Matters* to *Tiberius*;
" and conſequently the *Teſtimony* of *Pilate* cannot from hence be
" urged." Sad Stuff indeed! Who but *Pontius Pilate*, could ſend Accounts from *Judæa*, according to the ſtated Rules of the Empire above-mentioned? *Pilatus nunciavit Tiberio*, I hope, is plain enough in *Tertullian* however.

" *counterfeit* Acts of *Pilate*, fram'd by the Ene-
" mies of Chriſtianity amongſt the *Romans*
" themſelves; full of Blaſphemy againſt Chriſt;
" which, at the Command of the Tyrant *Maxi-*
" *mine*, were publiſh'd both in Town and
" Country, and put into the Hands of their
" *School-Maſters*, for to inſtruct their Children
" out of *them*; which is the Account given *
" us by *Euſebius*. *Euſebius* diſcovered the *Cheat*
" from the Conſulſhip † of *Tiberius*; but not
" by any Strength of *Argument* that he has
" ſhewn himſelf. However, theſe *Acts* the *Ro-*
" *mans* made uſe of, under *Diocleſian* and *Maxi-*
" *mine*, to make Chriſtians refrain from *Mar-*
" *tyrdom*; as appears from the Saying of *Maxi-*
" *mine* himſelf, when thoſe bleſſed People *Ta-*
" *rachus*, *Probus*, and *Andronicus*, were going to
" ſuffer; *Thou Varlet, thou ſilly Creature*, (ſays
" he, turning to one of them,) *thou doſt not*
" *know who it is thou calleſt upon; Chriſt, a*
" *meer Man, made a Priſoner by* Pontius Pi-
" late, *whoſe* Acts *are recorded.* It cannot
" therefore be doubted, but that there
" were *ſome* Acts of *Pilate* done by his *own*
" *Authority*, and tranſmitted to *Tiberius*, which
" Hereticks, as well as Heathens, *interpolated*
" as they pleaſed, when once the *true* Acts
" were not forth coming to confute them. *Pi-*
" *late* having related to *Tiberius*, what the
" Chriſtian

* Lib. 9, cap. 5.
† Lib. 1. cap. 9.

" Chriſtian * Profeſſion was; *Tiberius* moved " the Senate to have *it* ingrafted into their " own Religion, ſays *Euſebius* in his *Chronicle*. " *Syncletus*, ſays † St. *Chryſoſtom*, *had the ho-* " *nourable Office, amongſt the* Romans, *of con-* " *ſtituting ſuch as ſhould be deemed Gods:* " *Wherefore, when there had been a Declaration* " *made of* all Things *relating to* Chriſt, *the* " *Heathen Magiſtrates ſent to know, if it was* " *their Pleaſure to make him a God.* The ſame " Thing has ſince been told by *Oroſius*, *Cedrenus*, " *Turon*, and *Nicephorus*. The Enquiry then to " be made, is, whence this Tradition firſt came, " which is what *Euſebius* carefully Remarks; " and *Tertullian* appears to have *firſt* related " *theſe Things*; a Man exceedingly well verſed " in the *Roman* Affairs. He then, in his Apo- " logy, || ſays thus; Tiberius *therefore, in* " *whoſe Time the Chriſtian Name was firſt* " *known in the World, having learned from* Pa- " leſtine ſuch Things *as diſcovered there the* " *Truth of* Chriſt's *Divinity, he made a Re-* " *port of* THEM *to the Senate, uſing the Prero-* " *gative of giving his own Opinion in the Mat-* " *ter. The Senate, becauſe he had not approved* " *of a* DIVINITY *in regard to himſelf, rejected it.* " This is what the World, in general, has " received, upon the Teſtimony of *Tertullian*. " But *Tanaquil Faber*, in one of his Epiſtles **, " is

* Pilato de *Chriſtianorum Dogmate* ad Tiberium referente.
† Hom. 27. in 2 Cor.
|| Cap. 5.
** Ep. 12. Lib. 2.

" is pleaſed not to allow of *it*, making ſome fri-
" volous Objections, to leſſen the Credit of ſo
" great a Man as *Tertullian*. He firſt puts the
" *Queſtion*, How *Tertullian* came by the Know-
" ledge of theſe Things? And then *anſwers*
" his own Queſtion, in ſaying, That *Tertullian*
" had his Account from thoſe *Acts* of *Pilate*,
" which have been ſo often mentioned by the
" Antients. But this is an Anſwer highly *ab-*
" *ſurd*. The Acts of *Pilate* had nothing in
" them but the *Paleſtine* Affairs: Whereas
" *Tertullian* is telling us what was done by
" *Tiberius*, by the *Senate*, and at *Rome*; ſo
" that *Tertullian* could not have *theſe Things*
" from *Pilate*'s Acts, being written in *Judæa*.
" But then, the *Senate* had their daily Entries,
" or their *Journals*, *(as an* Engliſh *Parlia-*
" *ment has*;*)* from whence *Tertullian* might ex-
" tract *theſe Things*; at leaſt, it is what no
" Body can diſprove. *Tan. Faber*, in the next
" Place, objects, that he does not think *Tibe-*
" *rius* (a Perſon who did not mind Religion)
" would ſo far concern himſelf about *Chriſt*, as
" to ſay any Thing of him to the Senate. But
" this is too looſe a Way of talking, ſince
" *Suetonius* informs us, That there was nothing
" relating to public Buſineſs, of what Kind ſo-
" ever, ordinary, or extraordinary, but what
" he communicated to the Senate. *Tan. Faber*
" goes on: —— *Heyday!* (ſays he,) *What, did*
" *the Senate refuſe, when it was* Tiberius's
" *Will and Pleaſure?* He that rejects *Tertul-*

" *lian's*

" *lian's* Teſtimony for *ſuch a Reaſon* as this,
" ſhews that he is little acquainted with the
" Hiſtory of *Tiberius*, or of the *Senate*, or with
" *Tertullian* himſelf. It was the Temper and
" Way of *Tiberius*, when he laid any Thing
" before the Senate, to behave ſo, that, though
" he gave his Vote, they ſhould not be able to
" know what his real Meaning was. *He did*
" *not ſo much as complain* (ſays *Suetonius*) *when*
" *ſome Things were decreed centrary to his Opi-*
" *nion. The Senate* (ſays *Tertullian*) * *rejected*
" *what was propoſed, becauſe he* (Tiberius) *had*
" *not approved of it, in his own Caſe.* Where
" the beſt Account is given of this Matter.
" The *Divinity* had been offered before by the
" Senate to *Tiberius*, which he refuſed. He
" forbid the Honours of the *Temple*, and the
" *Flamins* to be paid him; and would not
" allow the ſetting up of Statues and Images
" without his Leave; and when *that* was ob-
" tained, it was conditionally, that *they* ſhould
" not be placed amongſt the Images of the
" Gods, but as Ornaments in their Houſes:
" So *Suetonius* has it. Now, becauſe *Tiberius*
" did not approve of the *Divinity* himſelf, but
" refuſed *it* when offered, the *Senate* concluded
" it to be the beſt and ſafeſt Way, not to ad-
" mit any other *Perſon* into the Number of
" their *Gods*, leaſt, by ſuch Admiſſion, they
" ſhould ſeem to make *him* greater than *Tibe-*
" *rius*. *Tan. Faber* carries his Objection ſtill
" farther,

* Senatus, quia in ſe non probaverat, reſpuit.

" farther, in denying that *ſuch* a Report, as " *Tertullian* makes concerning Chriſt, could " have been brought to Court ſo early, whilſt " *Tiberius* was living; for it was after *that*, " when the Name of *Chriſtian* took its Riſe " at *Antioch*. But *Tertullian*'s Diſcourſe here, " is not about the *Name* that the Diſciples of " Chriſt were to be called by; but it is con- " cerning *Chriſt himſelf*, whoſe *Works*, whoſe " *Death*, *Reſurrection*, and *Aſcenſion*, were " Things that *Pilate* might both know and " believe; and by his Miniſtry *Tiberius* might " know them too. Nay, *Pilate* could not be " ſo negligent in the Diſcharge of his Duty, as " to omit giving the Emperor an Account of " a *Tranſaction* ſo very remarkable in his *own* " *Province*. *Tan. Faber*, at laſt, when he is " not able to make the Matter itſelf appear " as *incredible*, endeavours to leſſen the Au- " thority of *Tertullian* himſelf; and ſays, " that he was not always *careful* in the Choice " of *Authors* that he made uſe of; whilſt he " himſelf [*Faber*] betrays the greateſt *Negligence* " in the Peruſal of *Tertullian*. There is no Part " therefore, in this Hiſtory of *Tertullian*, that " can be confuted. And ſince he was a Man " of that *Weight*; is ſo ancient an Author, and " ſo eminently vers'd in the *Roman* Affairs; it " is much ſafer, and more adviſeable to hold " with *Tertullian*, That *Tiberius* did make ſuch " Report to the *Senate* concerning the *Divi-* " *nity* of Chriſt." Thus far our excellent

Biſhop. And now, if you pleaſe, let us throw our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s *Bagatelles* about *Tertullian* into *one* Scale, and what this learned Prelate has ſaid himſelf, and from others, into the *other*; and, I believe, you'll want little more Information, to let you ſee the empty *Free-thinking* Part of the Pamphlet, in regard to this Particular.

*B.* Surely, any impartial Reader may ſee enough already, to make him aſhamed of ſuch a Writer. I obſerve, he does not think it proper to quote his *Maſter*, *Tan. Faber*, in this Matter; and 'twas wiſely done; for then he muſt have *confuted* what our judicious Prelate has obſerv'd; which, I am perſuaded, is a *Task* much too great for our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* to undertake. I don't wonder now, that he labours ſo much to ſet aſide *Tertullian*'s Teſtimony concerning theſe *Acts* of *Pilate*, becauſe I perceive *Euſebius* himſelf, and many other Writers, were beholden to *him* for ſome Particulars relating to thoſe *Acts*. But pleaſe to purſue your intended Method, Sir, in making your Obſervations upon what the Biſhop and the Authors, quoted by him, have ſaid in this Matter; and then take the *Scales*, and let us ſee the *Difference*, as you propoſe; only firſt tell me, why our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* calls thoſe Acts *Secret Accounts*?

*A.* This is the Thing I hinted at before; and I will now ſay ſomething more about it. "How came *Tertullian* (ſays * he) to know "what was contain'd in theſe *Secret Accounts*?

* Page 46.

By

By the *Secret Accounts* he means the Roman *Archives* or *Records*, as I took notice ſome time ago, (*p.* 43); ſo *Rigaltius* and others have explain'd it: But our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* thought it more for his Purpoſe, to have his *Engliſh* Reader believe, that theſe were *Places* where few or none might have *Acceſs* to; and, conſequently, that the *Acts* or Accounts lodg'd in 'em were *Secret Accounts*; for ſo he is pleaſed to tranſlate *Arcanis veſtris*. I remember, *Amm. Marcellinus* uſes the Word *Arcani*, to denote thoſe Perſons that were placed on the top of *Towers*, to diſcover the Enemy: And therefore, as *Arx* is the known *Latin* Word for a *Tower*, ſo 'twas as eaſy and natural for *Tertullian* to uſe the Word *Arcana*, as ſignifying thoſe *Things* that related to, or were *contain'd* in a *Tower*, as 'twas for *Marcellinus* to uſe the Word *Arcani*, as ſignifying the *Perſons* that were placed on the *Tower*. However this be, I am very ſure, from the *publick Appeals* frequently made to *theſe Places*, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s tranſlating (*Secret Accounts*) will make no very ſtrong Impreſſion on any intelligent Reader. But, ſays our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, *'Tis evident*, Euſebius *knew nothing of theſe* Acts, *but what he learnt from* Tertullian. Very ſtrange, indeed! 'Tis well known, that *Euſebius* had the Privilege granted him of ſearching all *Archives* or *Records* whatever throughout the *Roman* Empire; and he was a Writer but a little more than a hundred Years after *Tertullian* writ his *Apology*. But this only

by-the-by; that you mayn't think *Euſebius* knew nothing of theſe *Acts*, or the Contents, but what he had from *Tertullian*. The chief Matter now under Conſideration, are thoſe *Exceptions* taken by our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* to *Pilate's* Relation, as repreſented by *Tertullian*. This Caviller firſt *modeſtly* affirms in general thus *: "That *Pilate* "wrote the *Things*, which *Tertullian* ſays he "wrote, has no *Foundation* of *Probability*;" then makes a Recital, but a very unfair one, of *Tertullian's* Words; and afterwards puts his Queſtions, intending thereby to draw as odd an Inference: "Is this like *Pilate's* Conduct in the "Goſpels? Cou'd *Pilate* poſſibly ſay ſome of "the Things which *Tertullian* PUTS upon him? "Cou'd he tell *Tiberius* the Reaſon here given, "why *Jeſus* did not appear to all the Jews af-"ter his Reſurrection? Or cou'd he ſay, that "*He* was much more *truly taken into Heaven* "*than ever* Romulus *was*, and yet *continue* an "Infidel?" Theſe are *Things*, it ſeems, that, in our *Anti-Phlegoniſt's* Opinion, have no *Foundation* of *Probability*: But a few *Remarks* upon what the Biſhop, and the Authors cited by him, have ſaid, will fully juſtify *Tertullian*.

*B.* You'll excuſe me, if I interrupt you for a few Minutes in what you are going about. If our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has not made a *fair Recital* of *Tertullian's* Words, I don't well ſee how I can have a full and clear Underſtanding of this Matter

* P. 37, 38, 39.

Matter: I ought to know first what *Tertullian* has really and truly said upon it.

*A.* I suppose Mr. *Reeves*'s Translation will not be question'd: He tells us, in his * Preliminary Discourse to this Apology of *Tertullian*, " That when he went about to *translate* it, he " try'd *Tertullian* in all Dresses; that he fol- " low'd him as close as he could, among his " Briars and Thorns; and, that he has been " religiously careful in Matters of moment". Now, if you please, take up *Tertullian*, and read the Passage; and you'll soon find a Difference; and had the Passage been much longer than 'tis, it should not have been contracted by our *Anti-Phlegonist* in the Manner you see it, for Reasons that will appear presently.

*B.* *Tertullian*'s Account of the Matter, I find, stands † thus: " In the same Moment that He " [Christ] *dismiss'd* Life, the *Light departed* " *from the Sun*, and the World was benighted " at Noon-Day; and those Men, who acknow- " ledg'd this Eclipse, but were unacquainted " with the Prophecies that foretold it upon " Christ's Death, and finding it impossible to " be solv'd by the Laws of Nature, at last " roundly deny'd the *Fact*; and yet this Won- " der of the World you have related, and the " *Relation preserv'd in your* Archives *to this Day.* " Christ then being taken down from the Cross, " and lay'd in a Sepulchre, the Jews beset it " round with a strong Guard of Soldiers, fore-

arming

* Page 151, 152. † Page 261, 262, 263.

" arming them with the ſtricteſt Caution, that
" his Diſciples ſhould not come and ſteal away
" the Body unawares; becauſe he had foretold
" that he would riſe again from the Dead on
" the third Day. But, lo! on the third Day,
" a ſudden Earthquake aroſe, and the huge Stone
" was rolled from the Mouth of the Sepulchre,
" and the Guard ſtruck with Fear and Confu-
" ſion; not one Diſciple at the Action, and no-
" thing found in the Sepulchre, but the Spoils
" of Death, the Linnen Cloaths he was buried
" in. Nevertheleſs, the Chief Prieſts (whoſe
" Intereſt it was to ſet ſuch a wicked Lie on
" foot, in order to reclaim the People from a
" Faith, which muſt end in the utter Ruin of
" their Incomes and Authority among 'em) gave
" out, That his Diſciples came privily, and ſtole
" him away. For, after the Reſurrection, Chriſt
" thought not fit to make a publick Entry
" among the People, becauſe he would not vio-
" lently redeem ſuch obſtinate Wretches from
" Error; and that a Faith, which propoſes in-
" finite Rewards, ſhould labour under ſome Diſ-
" ficulties; that Believing might be a Virtue,
" and not a Neceſſity. But with ſome of his
" Diſciples he did eat and drink *forty* Days
" in *Galilee*, a Province in *Judea*, inſtructing
" them in all they ſhould teach; and then ha-
" ving ordain'd 'em to the Office of Preaching
" thoſe Inſtructions all over the World, he was
" parted from them by a Cloud, and ſo receiv'd
" up before 'em into Heaven, much more truly

" than

" than what your *Proclus's* report of *Romulus*,
" and ſome others of your *deified* Kings. *Pi-*
" *late*, who in his Conſcience was a Chriſtian,
" ſent *Tiberius Cæſar* an Account of ALL *theſe*
" PROCEEDINGS relating to Chriſt". Thus far *Tertullian*. The Paſſage is not *long*: Nor can I think the *Engliſh* Reader would have thought our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* tedious, had he thought fit to have given *it* entire, as it now is: But I eaſily perceive, it would not have ſerv'd his Purpoſe; and therefore 'twas rightly judg'd, that the beſt Way was to *abridge* it.

*A.* Will any one now, think you, (beſides our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*,) offer to maintain, after reading this Paſſage, that 'tis *Pilate* that ſays ALL this to *Tiberius*? Does not *Tertullian* plainly diſtinguiſh, when he ſays, *all* theſe *Proceedings*? Muſt *Tertullian's* Remarks on thoſe *Proceedings* be neceſſarily charg'd as *Pilate's*? Has not our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* therefore *deſignedly* left out *Proceedings*, that his Reader ſhould have no Room for making the *Diſtinction*? ALL *theſe Things*, (ſays he, in *Capitals*) *i. e.* ALL that he had given his Reader above †, or ALL that was contain'd really in this Paragraph of *Tertullian*, was to be ſuppos'd *Pilate's* Diſcourſe, and *his only*: Whereas nothing is plainer, than that the *Matters* of *Fact*, upon which *Tertullian* comments, are the *Things* properly to be aſcrib'd to *Pilate*. And yet I readily grant, that Governors, and other Officers in the *Roman* Empire, both

† Page 38.

both might and did *ſometimes* acquaint their Principals, not only with bare *Matters* of *Fact*, but alſo with their *own Obſervations* upon them. It was the Practice, you know, of *Pliny*, and ſeveral more, in their *Accounts* given of the Chriſtians. But how wide is the *Difference*, in the Caſe now before us, and how eaſily underſtood? Is it credible, when *Tertullian* had quoted the *Reſurrection* of *Chriſt* from the *Archives*, that he wou'd have it *underſtood* by thoſe he wrote to, that *Pilate* in thoſe very *Acts* had aſſign'd the following *Reaſon* for Chriſt's not making his *Publick Entry* afterwards; or rather, that the *Reaſon* was his own, *viz. becauſe Chriſt wou'd not violently redeem ſuch obſtinate Wretches from Error; and that a Faith, which propoſes infinite Rewards, ſhou'd labour under ſome Difficulties; that believing might be a Virtue, and not a Neceſſity?* Can we imagine that *Pilate* wou'd go about to inform *Tiberius*, that *Galilee was a Province of Judea*, (which are words *omitted* by our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*,) or that *Tertullian* wou'd make *Pilate* to be ſo *free* with his great Maſter, as to ſay Chriſt was receiv'd up into Heaven, *much more truly than what* YOUR Proclus's *report of* Romulus, *and ſome others of* YOUR *deify'd Kings?* Yet ſtill (as *Tertullian* ſays) *Pilate* ſent an Account of all theſe *Proceedings (Matters* of *Fact)* relating to Chriſt: So that *Tertullian* does not PUT theſe Things upon *Pilate*; as this Writer has ſhamefully charg'd, and wou'd have his Reader believe. There is a *Narrative* and a *Reaſoning* part

Part, both in this Paragraph of *Tertullian*; and none but our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* would have aſcribed *both* (without Exception) to *Pilate*. But, what if *Pilate* had talked like a *Chriſtian*, as well as reported *Facts* to *Tiberius*? It is but agreeable with the Character given of him here by *Tertullian*; *He was in his Conſcience a Chriſtian*; and our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* does not offer to diſpute it. It is certain, by the *Scripture* Account, he acted ſadly *againſt his Conſcience*; which makes *Tertullian* ſay, in another Place, that the *Jews extorted* Sentence againſt our Saviour to be crucified, from *Pontius Pilate*.

*B.* Sir, I am ſo thoroughly ſatisfied about your *Anti-Phlegoniſt's Bagatelles* (as you juſtly call them) in this Matter, that I will not ask you to hold the *Ballance*, or to compare them with what Biſhop *Pearſon*, and his *primitive* Writers have ſaid about it. I only deſire, you will anſwer the *Objection* that this Writer makes to *Juſtin Martyr*: For he *ſays; "Would *Pilate* "mention ſuch a Circumſtance, as the *Soldiers* "*caſting Lots for the Garments of our Lord*, "for which *Juſtin* appeals to theſe Acts? "That indeed is a material Circumſtance to a "Chriſtian, but to an Infidel it is nothing."

*A.* Hard Fate! that any *Part* of this Apology of *Juſtin Martyr* ſhould now need a Vindication: An Apology, which, conſidering the various and important Doctrines it treats of, and the Antiquity of its Author, may be juſtly looked on as one of the moſt conſiderable *Records* of

* Page 39.

*Chriſtianity* now extant amongſt us. The Character that *Photius* * gives of him is, *That he was a Man little behind even the Apoſtles themſelves, either in Point of Time, or Virtue*: Scarce *fifty* Years between St. *John*'s Revelation, and this *Apology* of *Juſtin*. He was, indeed, a great Enemy to the modern Way of *Free-Thinking*; for he "complains † (as Mr. *Reeves* has obſerved) of the lamentable Reaſonings, and "wretched Inconſiſtence of human Brain; and "that nothing is to be depended on, but the "divinely inſpired Writings; and affirms, in "this Apology, that *Plato* had all his Divinity "from *Moſes* and the Prophets." Yet this is the glorious Martyr, whoſe Veracity, Judgment, and good Senſe, is now called in queſtion, touching theſe *Acts* of *Pilate*. *That the Things for which* Juſtin Martyr *appeals to the* Acts *of* Pilate, *were ever ſent to*. Tiberius, *has no Foundation of Probability*, ſays our ‖ *Anti-Phlegoniſt*. And what are theſe Things? Would *Pilate* mention ſuch a Circumſtance, "ſays he, as the *Soldiers caſting Lots, &c.*?" Yes, ſurely, he would; and his Duty obliged him ſo to do. For, as *Suetonius* relates of *Pilate*'s Maſter, *Tiberius*, that there was *nothing* ſeemingly ſo *trivial*, in publick Affairs, but he thought proper to acquaint the *Senate* with it; ſo it may reaſonably be concluded, that he expected the Governors, in the ſeveral Provinces of his Empire,

* Cod. 234.
† *Paræn.* ad Græc.
‖ Page 37.

Empire, ſhould be as careful, as exact, and minute in their Accounts tranſmitted to him. Nor is it enough to ſay, (as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* does) that the *Soldiers caſting Lots, &c.* was not a *Circumſtance* at all material for an *Infidel* to be acquainted with; unleſs he could account for the Springs of Government, or was able to reaſon upon the Foot of *Roman* Policy. *Prophecies* were Things, that the *Romans* minded very much, whatever Quarter they came from: And therefore, if the *Soldiers*, tho' acting in the uſual Manner of dividing the Cloaths of a Perſon executed, had fulfilled a *Prophecy*; was it any Ways *improbable*, nay, was it not a Thing to be expected, that *Pilate* ſhould acquaint *Tiberius* it? The *Roman* Archives abounded with *Prophecies*; and, as I have more than once obſerved to you, * from *Phlegon*, (who, by the Favour of the Emperor, had ſuch free Acceſs to them in compoſing his *Annals.*) He was thence acquainted with ſeveral *Prophecies* of Chriſt himſelf; and, as we learn from *Lactantius* and *Origen*, Phlegon *aſcribed to Chriſt a Foreknowledge of the Times to come, and affirmed, that there had been an exact* Accompliſhment *of his* Predictions. And why are we not to believe, that *Phlegon* might be acquainted with this ancient Prophecy likewiſe, of the *Soldiers caſting Lots*, and *dividing Chriſt's Garments amongſt themſelves?* Had *Juſtin Martyr* appealed to



* See above at Page and in the *firſt Part*, p. 19.

the *Acts* of *Pilate* for *all the Indignities* that the Soldiers offered to our bleſſed Saviour; I can hardly think any unprejudiced Perſon would ſay, as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* does, that *Pilate*'s ſending ſuch an Account, could have no *Foundation* of *Probability*. But ſo it is; neither *Juſtin Martyr*, nor *Tertullian*, are to have any Weight with an *Engliſh* Reader, if our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* can bring it about: And I am very well ſatisfied, * *Origen*'s Books againſt *Celſus* would have been cavilled at too, if *Origen* had not *ſeemingly* ſided with our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* another Way.

*B.* I ſuppoſe you mean *Origen*'s 35th Diſcourſe upon St. *Matthew*; which, I obſerve, this Writer makes a mighty Stir about; but, in my Opinion, this is treating *Origen* very ill, in making him *contradict* himſelf in ſo notorious a Manner; and at the ſame Time it muſt be owned, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has ſhewn a great deal of *Weakneſs* in ſo doing. I will not trouble you, to explain this Matter for me farther than Mr. *W.* has done; for I think, he has ſaid enough, both for *vindicating* the one, and *expoſing* the other.

*A.* Sir, as the *Paſſage* is not long, it may be proper to refreſh our Memories with it, at ſo ſeaſonable a Time; and therefore, pray let it be read, before we take our leave of *Origen*.

*B.* Mr. *W.* at Page 13. obſerves, that the *Anſwer*, which it is ſuppoſed *Origen* makes to the

* *Origen*'s Appeal to *Phlegon*, in thoſe Books, is ſtruck out in Dr. *Clarke*'s *Boyle*'s Lectures.

the *Objection* formed in this Diſcourſe upon St. *Matthew*, ſeems to be *loſt*; and that *Origen*'s Books againſt *Celſus*, were writ ſeveral Years after this Commentary or Diſcourſe of his on St. *Matthew*. Mr. *W*. afterwards, at Page 30. expreſſes himſelf thus: To ſay nothing of the Difference, the *viſible Difference* here in general, (*i. e. Origen*'s Latin Commentaryon St. *Matthew*,) from the Stile and Genius of the *true Origen*: The genuine *Origen* ſays, the *Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Paſſion, was cauſed by an *Eclipſe of the Sun*. The *other* denies it, and aſcribes it to *thick Clouds* only. Thus the genuine *Origen* quotes the Text of St. *Luke*, as it ſtood in the Copies of his Age, that *there was a Darkneſs in the Day-time, by an Eclipſe of the Sun*. The *other* looks on that reading as an Interpolation; indeed, as a dangerous Interpolation made by the Enemies of Chriſtianity; nay, and afterwards directly *denies* that the Evangeliſts do ſo much as *name* the *Sun* upon the Occaſion; not only contrary to *Origen*'s own Words, and Citation of St. *Luke*'s Goſpel, but contrary to all the Citations and Manuſcripts of St. *Luke* now known in the World. Thus the genuine *Origen*, both in his *Greek*, and the *former* Part of this *Latin* Verſion, *cites* Phlegon *as a real and valuable Heathen Witneſs* to the Truth of the extraordinary *Darkneſs* or *Eclipſe of the Sun*, related in the Goſpels. But the *other* is rather buſy in *ſetting aſide all ſuch Heathen Teſtimonies*, and ſupporting his own

own novel Opinion, that this Darkneſs came only from *thick Clouds*, peculiar to *Judæa*. Thus the genuine *Origen* never confines either the *great Darkneſs*, or the *great Earthquake* to *Judæa*, as does the *other*. But his *Appealing* to *Phlegon's* Teſtimony, which we know extended the Earthquake as far as *Bithynia*, (eight hundred Miles diſtant from *Judæa*,) implies his *own* Opinion to have been, that *they* extended ſo far; which was alſo the unanimous Opinion of the earlieſt Centuries of Chriſtianity. Thus the genuine and great *Origen* could not poſſibly be guilty of ſo groſs an *Abſurdity*, as once to ſuppoſe, that by *all the Earth*, or *all the Land* might be meant the *ſingle City Jeruſalem*, as this trifling Author more than once intimates, with the greateſt Degree of Abſurdity: While there is no certain Inſtance yet produced, that thoſe Phraſes are ever uſed in the *New Teſtament*, in ſo narrow a Senſe as the *Land* of *Judæa* only. The Judgment of the very learned *Huetius* upon this *Latin* Commentary of *Origen*, is this; "What is remaining, ſays he, in the *Latin* Commentaries * on *Matthew*, are miſerably deformed. The "Barbarity of this old Interpreter was conſummate; the Skill he had in the *Greek* Tongue ſmall; he was deſtitute of all Manner of Sagacity in clearing the moſt difficult Paſſages; of which he was ſo conſcious, that he paſſes over the moſt difficult Places, and "that

* Huetii *Origenian.* p. 243, 252.

" that, as it were, on Purpoſe. He has, to be " ſure, allowed himſelf ſo extravagant a De- " gree of Licentiouſneſs, in giving us this " *Tranſlation*, as is very ſurprizing; ſometimes " omitting intire Pages, and ſometimes adding " others. Nor has he any where truly under- " ſtood the Meaning of the Copy that lay " before him."

*A.* You have read enough: I think it is very much to the Purpoſe, in a few Words; and it is what our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, I believe, will not digeſt in haſte. You may remember I did formerly (when we had our *firſt Conference*) give you my Thoughts upon the *Extent* of this *wonderful Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Paſſion; and I am ſtill of the * ſame Opinion that it was *univerſal*, and not to be reſtrained either to *Judæa*, as ſome, or to the Limits of the *Roman* Empire, as others. What chiefly confirms me in this Opinion, is a ſtricter Examination of the *Way* and *Manner* of the ancient *Greek* and *Latin* Writers expreſſing themſelves upon this Subject: For I think, upon a due Compariſon made of one Expreſſion with another, this Matter is pretty plain, without *reaſoning* upon it, as I did before.

*B.* Sir, as you have raiſed my Expectation, I hope I ſhall have the Satisfaction of hearing you argue, upon this Point, from the *ancient* Writers. Mr. *Whiſton*'s Collection lies before you: Pleaſe to *compare* the Expreſſions of thoſe Writers,

* Part I. p. 42.

Writers, as to this Particular, one with the other; and then let me know what *Conclusion* you draw from them in Proof of such *universal Darkness*.

*A.* I do by no Means say, that what I am going to offer, will amount to a *certain Proof*; nor, perhaps, give you the same Satisfaction as it has given me. My Extracts are here in my Hand; and I will read them to you in order, both from the Evangelists, and from the several *Authors*, as Mr. *Whiston* has ranged them in his Collection.

## Mr. *Whiston*'s Collection.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Testamentum Levi*; ap. Grabe Spic. P. 160. | The Lord will execute Judgment upon the *Sons of Men*, when the Rocks shall be rent, and the Sun be put out, ... at the Passion of the most High. [1700 Years before *Christ*.] | Ἐπὶ τὰς πέτρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων. |
| *Matt.* xxvii. 45. | There was Darkness *over all the Earth*. [*A. D.* 60.] | Ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν. |
| *Luke* xxiii. 44. | There was Darkness *over the whole Earth*. [*A. D.* 61.] | Ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν. |
| *Mark* xv. 33. | There was Darkness *over the whole Earth*. [*A. D.* 62.] | Ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν. |

Recognitions

* Some of these Authorities are cited *only* on Account of their *Antiquity*; which is sufficient for the present Purpose.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Recognitions of *Clement* I. 41. | When the true Prophet ſuffered, *the whole World* ſuffered with him. --- *The whole World* was in Commotion. [*A. D.* 120.] | Omnis ei compaſſus eſt Mundus. --- Cum omnis Mundus commotus ſit. |
| *Africanus* ap. Syncell. p. 322, &c. | A moſt terrible Darkneſs came ſuddenly *over all the World*. [*A. D.* 220.] A *Mundane* Prodigy. | Καθ' ὅλην τὸν κόσμον. Τὸ κοσμικὸν τέρας. |
| *Arnobius* Lib. I. p. 32. | When Chriſt put off his Body, --- *all the Elements of the World* were terrified, &c. [*A. D.* 203.] | Exterrita univerſa Mundi ſunt Elementa. |
| *Dionyſius* Areop. Vol. II. p. 91. vid. p. 214, & *Bach.* Paraph. p. 103. | We were both of us then preſent at *Heliopolis in Egypt*, and ſaw the Eclipſe, when our Saviour was on the Croſs. [*A. D.* 360. *] | Ἀμφότεροι γὰρ ἡμεῖς, ----- καὶ ἃ τὴν τῆς Αἰγύπτου Ἡλιούπολιν. |
| *Chryſoſtom* in *Mat.* xxvii. 45. | This Darkneſs was *over all the habitable Earth*. ----- It came at Noon, that *all the Inhabitants of the Earth* might learn by it; for it was *Day-Time every where* in the habitable Earth. [*A. D.* 398.] | Ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην. Ἵνα πάντες οἱ τὴν γῆν οἰκοῦντες. Ὅτι πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἡμέρα ἦν. |
| *Oecumenius* in *Mat.* xxvii. 45. | This Darkneſs was a *mundane Prodigy*: But not one that concerned a *Part* of the World only, as did the Darkneſs in *Egypt*. | Κοσμικὸν Τέρας |

Q Oroſius

* Mais il eſt *certain* (dit *Du Pin*) que ces Livres attribuez à Saint *Denis* l'Areopagite ſont écrits depuis le *quatriéme* Siecle, & avant que le *ſixiéme* fût avancé.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Oroſius* Hiſtor. vii. 4. | A terrible Night was drawn *over the Earth* on a ſudden; and, as the Saying is, the *wicked World* feared an eternal Night. [*A. D.* 416.] | Tetra nox ſubito obducta *Terris* eſt. Impiaque æternam timuerunt *ſecula* noctem. |
| Chronicon Alex. ad An. Tiberii 18. | The Sun was darkned *over all the World.* [*A. D.* 400 or 500.] | Εἰς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον. |
| *Malela* ad *A. D.* 33. P. 310. | The Sun was darkened, and there was Darkneſs *upon the World.* [*A. D.* 600. or 850.] | Εἰς τὸν κόσμον. |

Thus you ſee at one View, and in a very narrow Compaſs, how both the *Evangeliſts*, and other ancient Writers, for *ſix hundred* Years after them, have *expreſs'd* themſelves, as to the *Extent* of this wonderful *Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Paſſion. For my own part, I cannot think of *it* otherwiſe than as *Univerſal*; can by no means aſſent to thoſe Writers, who would reſtrain thoſe Words of the Evangeliſts *(over all the Earth*, and *over the whole Earth)* to the *Roman* Empire only; and that for theſe two Reaſons: The one is, that St. *Luke* has very plainly *diſtinguiſh'd* in this Matter: For whereas he here ſays, (xxiii. 44.) ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν, *over the whole Earth*; yet in another place (ii. 1.) where he informs us of a *Tax*, or Inrollment rather, throughout the *Roman* Empire, he does not ſay, ὅλην τὴν γῆν, but πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην, which we tranſlate *all the World*; i. e. *all* that

that *Part* of it which was under the Juriſdiction of *Auguſtus Cæſar*: For the *Goths*, *Armenians*, and ſeveral other Provinces, were then a *Free* People, and no ways ſubject to *Auguſtus*; which made St. *Ambroſe* remark upon theſe Words of St. *Luke*, that *Chriſt's Empire was of a larger Extent than that of* Auguſtus. [Gothis *non imperabat* Auguſtus, *non imperabat* Armeniis, *Imperat* Chriſtus.] The ſame Word (οἰκουμένη) in another place [*Acts* xi. 28.]' is to be taken ſtill in a more limited ſenſe, including, as I take it, the Land of *Judea* only. You will ſay, perhaps, that St. *Chryſoſtom*, as we have juſt taken notice, uſes the Word οἰκουμένην for the *habitable Earth*; and that is *true* likewiſe. This is the *proper* Signification of the *Word*; and ſo St. *Chryſoſtom* explains it, (notwithſtanding that Illuſtration of his from the *Darkneſs* formerly in *Egypt*;) for he ſays, *All the Inhabitants of the Earth*; and *Day-time every where in the habitable World*, when the Eclipſe began: Yet 'tis as *true*, that we cannot underſtand this Word οἰκουμένην, as uſed by St. *Luke*, in the ſame Senſe as St. *Chryſoſtom* uſes it, becauſe the *Habitable Earth*, or *all the Inhabitants of the Earth*, were not liable to be *tax'd* by that Emperor. And yet, tho' the *Word* admits of *both* theſe Senſes, and is * often ſo uſed; you ſee, the Evangeliſt uſes *it* in a *limited* Senſe: But when he comes to ſpeak of the *Extent* of this wonderful Darkneſs, he uſes a Word the moſt *extenſive* in its Signifi-



* Vid. *Cunrad. Dieter.* in voce οἰκουμένη.

cation, and ſuch as the LXX Greek Interpreters made uſe of to expreſs the *Terr-aqueous* Globe by. My other *Reaſon* is, That the *ancient* Writers, above mention'd, ſeem to have underſtood the *Evangeliſts* in the ſame Manner as I do: For thoſe Words, *the Sons of Men*; *all the Elements of the World*; *all the Inhabitants of the Earth*; *a Mundane Prodigy*, &c. (as you heard me read 'em juſt now,) are to me very odd Expreſſions, if they ſerve to point no farther than the *Roman* Empire. You may pleaſe to remember what *Grotius* has obſerv'd, "That "tho' *Phlegon* aſſigns a *Place* for the Earth-"quake, yet he aſſigns *none* for the Darkneſs; "I would not, ſays he, have this *Darkneſs* un-"derſtood of *Judæa* only, ſince the old *Aſtro-"logers* and *Chronographers*, who take notice of "it, make no Reſtriction as to the *Place*". And a little after, his *Remark* is excellently good, I think, upon *Tertullian*'s calling this Darkneſs the *Wonder of the World*; for "here the *Father*, "ſays he, ſufficiently guarded againſt the *Opi-"nion* of thoſe who aſcribe † ſuch Darkneſs to "*Judæa* only. My Opinion is, that other Na-"tions were concern'd in this *Prodigy*, as well as "the *Jews*; —— and therefore the Meaning "(ſays he) and Intent of *this Darkneſs*, is to be "taken in as large and comprehenſive a Senſe

"as

† *Grotius* does not diſtinguiſh (as above) between γῆν and οἰκουμένην: But he is certainly miſtaken, if he underſtands οἰκουμένην to be uſed by the *Evangeliſt* in regard to the *Darkneſs* at Chriſt's Paſſion.

" as poſſible ". And this reminds me of the *Reaſoning Part* we had upon it, if you remember, the *firſt Day* || we met: I ſhall not think it improper, if we ſubjoin it. I will freely ſpeak my own Senſe of this Matter, (I told you,) whatever Weight it may have with you. Our Saviour's Crucifixion, it muſt be allow'd, had a relation to the Sins of the *whole* World, and not of *thoſe only* who liv'd in the Land of *Paleſtine*: Therefore this *miraculous Darkneſs* being the Method taken by God to *manifeſt* his Wrath and vindictive Juſtice againſt Sin, (for in *Adam* all had ſinned, and all were ſenſible of a natural Corruption,) ſuch a *Sanction* of Divine Wrath, 'tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe, would be made known to *all Mankind* at the Death of our Redeemer. In *Adam* we all *died*; and therefore, when the Fulneſs of Time was come, that *in Chriſt we ſhould be all made alive*; what is more naturally to be concluded, than that this *miraculous Darkneſs*, out of which *Light* was to ariſe to the *Gentiles*, ſhould be noted by our Heavenly Father to the *Fallen Race of Mankind* in general, as well as to the People of the *Jews*? The Anſwer you made me then, was, That you did not make any Objection to this ſort of *Reaſoning*: But you queſtion'd whether I had any publick *Records* extant to ſupport the Truth of ſuch a *Fact*, as an *Univerſal Darkneſs*. Upon which I referr'd you to the *Chineſe* Annals.

*B.* 'Tis

|| Part I. p. 42.

*B.* 'Tis very true, Sir: I did not *object* to your Way of Reaſoning on this Topick of an *Univerſal Darkneſs*; and, I think, there is leſs Reaſon for any one to do it now; becauſe, by *comparing* what the *Ancients* have ſaid upon it, in the Manner you have done, there are other *Records*, I ſee, to be produced for ſupporting the Truth of the *Fact*, beſides *thoſe* amongſt the *Chineſe*. As to the latter, you obſerve, that your *Anti-Phlegoniſt* and Mr. *W.* both ſeem to make a *Jeſt* of it: I hope, before we part, you'll take ſome notice of their Behaviour towards *Huetius* and thoſe learned *Jeſuites* that have reported from the *Chineſe Annals*; and not give up the Point, as, I perceive, they would have it done: However, ſuch ſort of *Evidence* does not *now* ſeem to be wanting neither. But I could wiſh, before you enter upon that Affair, you would explain your ſelf in one Particular, *viz.* Why in your Liſt of *ancient Writers* (juſt given in) you quote *Dionyſius*, and yet make no Uſe of him in your Application? I ſuppoſe, you don't agree with your *Anti-Phlegoniſt* in all that he ſays about *Dionyſius*.

*A.* By no means; as you will quickly ſee. The Reaſon of my placing *Dionyſius* in the Liſt was, that you might obſerve, that the *Darkneſs* was not confined to the Land of *Judæa*. As to the *Fact*, it has been related (according to Biſhop *Pearſon* and Dr. *Cave*) about *Fourteen hundred* Years ago; and *Michael Syncellus* * (a-

bove

* P. 203, 213.

bove *Nine hundred* Years ago) takes notice, "That "there was come down a *Tradition* from the "former Times, deliver'd from Father to Son, "that this great Man *Dionyſius*, at our Sa- "viour's Paſſion, when the Sun was hidden in "*the Midſt of the Day*, was greatly ſurpriz'd." The Opinion, which has been look'd on as moſt probable, is, that *Apollinarius*, Biſhop of *Laodicea*, compiled theſe Works, and aſſum'd the credible Name of *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*; (a Practice very common amongſt the Ancients.) And poſſibly this Biſhop, amongſt his *own* Works, might firſt of all inſert *thoſe* that were *really* the *Areopagite's*; or at leaſt the *Traditional* part, that *Syncellus* ſpeaks of. However it be, as to Matters of *Fact*, I think, great Regard ought to be had to ſo ancient a Writer, and one that has been ſo *diſtinguiſh'd* in the World for many Ages. The *Chronicon Alexandrinum* * quotes him above *Twelve* or *Thirteen* hundred Years ago, as writing an Epiſtle to *Polycarp* upon this Extraordinary Eclipſe; and *Philoponus* †, (that we talk'd of ſome Time ago,) not long after, quoted this *Dionyſius*, as *explaining* how the ſame Eclipſe was cauſed. *Photius* tells us at the Beginning of his *Bibliotheque*, That one *Theodore* wrote a Book, to anſwer the Objections made to the Works of *Dionyſius*. You obſerve, I am not pleading for the *Genuineſs* of theſe Works, as if they had the *Areopagite* for their Author;

* Ad An. *Tiberii* XVIII.
† De *Creatione* III. p. 116.

Author; but only desiring you to take notice, for *how long a Time*, and *by whom* the Author of them has been quoted; and surely, upon the Authority of such *Antiquity*, and such *Distinction* of the Author, the Argument must be stronger against our *Anti-Phlegonist*, in respect of that *Fact now* before us.

*B.* I think your Method's right: For why must *that* be reckon'd an *absurd Romance*, (as our *Anti-Phlegonist* is pleas'd to call it,) when it has stood the *Test* of the wisest and most learned Men, for so many *Ages*? "But (says "he *) it signifies but *little* to enquire *when* he "(this *Dionysius*) liv'd, or to enter into a Con-"troversy which exercis'd the greatest and lear-"nedst Criticks and Chronologers of the last "Century.

*A.* I care as little as our *Anti-Phlegonist*; nor is it my Design to enter into any sort of Controversy about the *Antiquity* of this Writer; for that Matter is plain enough already: But it must ever be acknowledg'd, that the *longer* a *Fact* has been discuss'd, and keeps its Ground, the *stronger* it grows, and less liable to Exception. There are many learned Men (as I told you in † our first Conference) who do not in the least question the Truth of this *Fact*; I mean, of the *real Dionysius*'s being at *Heliopolis* in *Egypt*, when our Saviour suffer'd, and when the surprizing Darkness extorted that *Exclamation.*

* Page 57.
† Part I. p. 48.

*tion.* *Suidas* ſays expreſly, "that the *Areopa-*
"*gite* went into *Egypt* in the Reign of *Tiberius*,
"that he might converſe with the Wiſemen
"*there*; that he had, for a Companion, *Apollo-*
"*phanes* the Sophiſt; that they were both at
"*Heliopolis* in *Egypt* together, at the Time that
"our Saviour ſuffer'd; when (ſays *Suidas*) there
"was a *preternatural* Eclipſe, &c. [τῆς ἡλιακῆς ἐκλεί ψεως ὑ παρὰ φύσιν γεγενημένης."] The Learned alſo aſſign ſeveral Reaſons to ſupport the *Fact*, as being deliver'd down in a *Traditionary* Way for above eleven Centuries; and as having the *Judgment* alſo of many eminent Writers beſides, ſuch as *Cyrill*, *Ephrem*, *Maximus*, *Sophronius*, and *Juvenal* Patriarch of *Jeruſalem*, in favour of this *Fact*. If then the *Fact* be ſo well ſupported, why muſt the *Way* and Manner of *relating* it be ſo much ridiculed by our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*? Why is this ancient Writer, whoever he was, *now* to be expos'd as a Writer of an *abſurd Romance*, that has never been thought ſo, for theſe *fourteen hundred* Years paſt? Could our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* make no Grains of Allowance for any *Miſtake* that might poſſibly happen in rendering this *Relation* obſcure, if not ſeemingly inconſiſtent? Muſt the *Judgment* of ſo many Perſons, ancient and modern, ſubmit to the ſullen *Caprice* of this Gentleman? Or, has it been reſerv'd for the L——r of S. *J*——*s* to undeceive the World in this Matter; and in *that* (as he ſays) *to do a real Service to the Cauſe of Chriſt*?

*B.* I ſuppoſe his repreſenting *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian* in the Manner we have ſeen him, was much the ſame ſort of *real Service*: But I cannot think, he has by any Means done this *Writer* Juſtice, in his *Tranſlation*: He ſaddles him with *Abſurdities*; and yet, I fancy, makes *them* himſelf. Pray does *Suidas*, which is the *Author* he quotes, ſo read it in the *Greek*, viz. that the *Eclipſe* began at the *ninth Hour*? He ſays, this is one Thing very *remarkable* in the *Romance*. "How abſurd ſoever this *Romance* is, "ſays he, yet one Thing is remarkable, that the "Eclipſe is *made to begin at the* ninth Hour, "*or at nine a-Clock in the* Morning". Pray, why does our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* quote *Suidas*, and not rather the *Epiſtle* itſelf of *Dionyſius*, that relates the *Fact*?

*A.* You'll find the Caſe quite otherwiſe, by-and-by, than our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has repreſented it: And tho' Mr. *W.* (*p.* 35) is pleas'd to impute it to want of *Judgment*, I believe it will appear to be rather for want of *Sincerity*. I told you a long time * ago, that you are not to expect *Sincerity* from your *Free-thinking* Gentry: I ſhall make it notoriouſly *evident* to you, (the next Time I have the Happineſs of ſeeing you here) in relation to the late Dr. *Samuel Clarke* alſo. I tax'd *him* with it many Years before he died: But tho' the Matter was then, and ever will be, undeniably plain, (and more of that Nature will ſoon appear in the World, God willing,) yet I could

* Part I. p. 14.

could not prevail, (as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has done,) to have any Alteration made in his Book, call'd *The Doctrine of the Trinity*; or to have any the leaſt Defence made by him, or his Friends, in the Point of *Inſincerity*, ſo directly charg'd upon him; and *that* in a Matter of very great Importance. Now, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt's Inſincerity* is as evident in the Caſe now before us: Had he quoted *Dionyſius's* Epiſtle, it would not have ſerv'd his Purpoſe, as you will perceive preſently. *Dionyſius* ſays, "That he and "*Apollonius* ſaw the Moon, when it was not "the Time for a *Conjunction*, *coincide* with the "Sun; and again, (ἀῦθις,) from the *ninth Hour* "to the Evening, ſtanding in direct *Oppoſition* "to the Sun." But *Suidas* giving *two* Accounts (from different Hands) of *Dionyſius*, and mentioning the *ſixth Hour* in one, and the *ninth Hour* in the other, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* catch'd at it. I'll firſt read you the Paſſage in *Suidas* (relating to the *ſixth Hour*) truly tranſlated; and you here have the Original, for your farther Satisfaction. *Suidas* then relates the Affair thus: "Theſe two * (*Dionyſius* the *Areo-* "*pagite*, and *Apollophanes*) were both together "at *Heliopolis* in *Egypt*, when our Saviour ſuf-

 "fer'd

* Καὶὰ γῶν ἷον καιρὸν τῦ σωτηρίυ πάθυς ἄμφω ἦσην ἐν Ηλίυ πόλει τῇ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ. Καὶ δὴ ἧς Ἑλιακῆς Ἐκλείψεως ἡ κατὰ Φύσιν γεγενημένης.. ἦγὰρ ἦν Συνόδυ καιρός. [ἀλλὰ παραδόξως ἷῳ ἡλίῳ τῆς σελήνης συμπιπτύσης, ἢ ἀπὸ τῆς ϛ΄ΕΚΤΗΣ ὥρας ἄχρι ἧς ἑσπέρας εἰς τὸ τῦ ἡλίυ διάμετρον ὑπερφυῶς ἀνθικαλασάσης.]

" fer'd; there being alſo at that Time a *pre-*
" *ternatural* Eclipſe of the Sun: For it was
" not the Time for a *Conjunction*; [the *Moon*
" in a very ſurprizing Manner *coinciding* with
" the Sun, and ſtanding (*or returning again*)
" Diametrically oppoſite, from the *Sixth Hour*
" to the Evening, contrary to the Courſe of
" Nature."] Thus far *Suidas*. The *Sixth Hour*, you ſee, is very plain; but then all within the *Brackets* our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has thought proper to *leave out* in his Quotation: And yet had it been ἐνάτης inſtead of ἕκτης, as *Michael Syncellus* reads it, and from whence *Suidas* took it, it can do our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* no manner of Service, becauſe he won't allow the *Ninth Hour* here to mean our *Three o' Clock* in the Afternoon; whereas nothing is plainer. However, let us hear how he argues, (*Page* 62.) after he has quoted *Suidas* for his *Ninth Hour*. " Had the
" *Areopagite*, ſays he, obſerv'd the *Athenian* Rules
" of computing their Time, he muſt have rec-
" kon'd his *Hours* from *Sun-ſet*: For the
" *Athenians* began their Day at the Setting of
" the Sun, and reckon'd from Sun-ſet to Sun-
" ſet." And does not *Suidas* here inform us, that the *Areopagite* did obſerve the *Athenian* Rules of computing their *Time*? And when this Paſſage in *Suidas* lay ſo plain before our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s Eyes, was he not oblig'd to acquit himſelf like an *Honeſt Man*, in acquainting his *Reader* with it; eſpecially when, at his ſetting out, he makes ſo ſolemn a Declaration

tion, *That he is doing real Service to the Cauſe of Chriſt?* Obſerve him likewiſe, in the other Remark that follows, upon his *Ninth Hour*, from *Suidas*: "The *Areopagite*, ſays he, reckoning his Days as the *Egyptians*, (where the *Scene* is laid,) and the *Romans* did their Civil Day, and we do ours, from Midnight to Midnight; 'tis very remarkable, that he ſays, He ſaw the Moon diametrically under the Sun at *Nine o'-Clock*." This looks plauſible enough to an ordinary *Engliſh* Reader; and, I don't doubt, paſſes current amongſt our young *Free-thinking* Sparks; But I'll venture to affirm, that our *Anti Phlegoniſt* has here likewiſe *impos'd* upon his Reader in a very groſs Manner: For when the *Areopagite*, after his Converſion by St. *Paul*, (ſee *Acts* xvii. 34.) wrote this *Apologetique* Letter to *Polycarp* the venerable Biſhop of *Smyrna*, he was then Biſhop of *Athens* himſelf; and therefore the *Scene* is to be laid *there*, where he writes it, and not in *Egypt*, where he ſtudied, when a Heathen, and before his Converſion. And were it granted, that ſome *other* Perſon, and not *Dionyſius* himſelf, writ this Letter, yet it would have been highly improper for the Author to have ſuppos'd *Dionyſius* living at *Athens*, and not to have obſerv'd the *Athenian* Rules of computing their *Time*. And indeed, how could the Biſhop, he wrote to, poſſibly underſtand it otherwiſe, eſpecially when the *Ninth Hour* (he knew) was ſo *contradictory* to the Account given by the *Evangeliſts*? So

that

that, you ſee, the *Sixth Hour* mention'd by *Suidas*, and the *Athenian* Rule of computing *Time*, mention'd by our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, agree both very well together, though he deſign'd it quite otherwiſe. As to his talking of the *Roman* or *Civil* Day, notwithſtanding his Quotation from *Cenſorinus*, (in which I ſhall not now ſpend Time to undeceive him,) let him conſult *Grotius* on *Mat.* xxvii. 45. and he will find that the *Lawyers* began their Pleadings at *Rome* much about the ſame Time as *ours* do in *Weſtminſter-Hall*; and yet they call'd it the *Third* Hour, as we call it the *Ninth*. *Exercet Raucos Tertia Cauſidicos.* So *Ignatius* (*ad* Smyrnenſes) *Chriſt receiv'd his Sentence from* Pilate *about the* Third *Hour.*

*B.* Sir, you ſurprize me very much: Give me Leave to imagine, that *Suidas* has, ſomewhere or other, mention'd the *Ninth Hour*, though not in the Paſſage that you have cited: If ſo, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has then, in ſome meaſure ſaved his Credit; and ſince he would not; 'tis your Buſineſs now, I hope, to make *Suidas* conſiſtent with himſelf.

*A.* I will do all the *Juſtice* in this Matter that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, or his ableſt Friends, can require of me. *Suidas* names the *Ninth Hour* in the very ſecond Page after he has mention'd the *Sixth*; ſo that, you'll ſay, he's *ſeemingly*, at leaſt, inconſiſtent with himſelf. But what then? *Suidas*'s Annotator *corrects* the Text, as to the *Ninth Hour*; and ſo makes him

him *conſiſtent*; firſt, in tranſlating it the *Sixth Hour*, and then giving his *Reaſon* for * it, at the bottom of the Margin. But does our *honeſt Anti-Phlegoniſt* tell his Reader one Tittle of this? or does he offer to ſhew, our Annotator is miſtaken? I grant, it was by no means proper for him ſo to do. But when he ſaw *Suidas*'s Annotator had made a Correction, and gave ſuch a Reaſon for it, (no leſs than *Scripture Authority*,) one would have thought, it might have prevail'd with our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* to have been more modeſt in *impoſing* upon his Reader, without any Reaſon aſſign'd: But, if he is not convinc'd, he may yet ſatisfy himſelf, that it is *ſo*, by caſting an Eye upon the Greek *Scholia* of *Maximus*, and upon *Pachymere*'s Paraphraſe on this Paſſage of *Dionyſius*: For it appears undeniably plain from both theſe Writers, that they knew nothing of any ſuch *Reading* in *Dionyſius*, as the Eclipſe BEGINNING at the NINTH Hour. Both the *Scholiaſt* and the *Commentator* talk of this Paſſage in ſuch a Manner, that there is no room left to doubt, but that the Copies lying before 'em did read agreeably to the Account given by the *Evangeliſts*. Nevertheleſs, I muſt think (and I believe the World will think ſo too)

* Sic etiam legitur (ἐνάτης ὥρας) apud ipſum *Dionyſium*, Tom. II. Oper. ejus, p. 91. ſed minus recte. Scribendum enim potius eſt ἀπὸ ἕκτης ἐνάτης ὥρας; propter *auctoritatem* Evangeliſtarum, qui, tempore paſſionis Dominicæ, ab Hora *Sexta* uſq; ad nonam Orbi Tenebras offuſas fuiſſe referunt. [*At*, *inquit* Anti-Phlegoniſta, *haud moror* Auctoritatem *Evangeliſtarum*; *ſcribendum potius* ἐνάτης; *aliàs enim claudicat Argumentum.*]

too) that he muſt have caſt an *Eye* upon theſe *two Writers*; and this makes our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s Crime the greater.

B. *Who ſo blind, as thoſe that won't ſee?* is an old Saying, I think, Sir, and very applicable in the preſent Caſe. I perceive, the more we enquire into this Matter, the more *flagrant* is the INSINCERITY of this unhappy Gentleman. But ſince *this*, that you mention *laſt* concerning *Maximus* and *Pachymere*, is what we call a *Clincher*, I deſire you will make this Matter as plain as poſſible, by giving me the Original Words from each Author, and your own Tranſlation beſides. Mr. *W.* mentions *Maximus* in his Liſt, 'tis true; but his Quotation from him (*p.* 19.) does not give me any Satisfaction in the particular Point now before us. *Pachymere*, in the Liſt, is expreſs.

*A. Maximus* was born, ſays Dr. *Cave*, A. D. 580: His *Copy* therefore carries the greater weight with it, for its *Antiquity*. He had likewiſe the Opportunity of peruſing the beſt *Copies*, becauſe he was honour'd by the Emperor *Heraclius* with very conſiderable Employments at Court; was afterwards a great Stickler againſt the *Monothelites*. Now *Maximus*, upon the Account given by *Dionyſius* of this wonderful Eclipſe, ſays thus: "Hence, (*i. e.* from this "Account of the Matter given by *Dionyſius*) "mind how the *Doubt* is ſolv'd that occurrs in "St. *Luke* * the Evangeliſt. *Dionyſius* is the only

* Could *Maximus* ſay this, and ſee the *Ninth Hour* in the Copy of *Dionyſius*'s Epiſtle?

" only Man that has given us the Explication " of this Prodigy: For, whereas St. *Luke* ſays, " From the *Sixth* Hour there was Darkneſs at " the Paſſion of our Lord, the Sun being *eclip-* " *ſed*; it was controverted * by all, how he " could call this an *Eclipſe*, the Moon being " *Fourteen Days* old, when there is no Con- " junction of Sun and Moon. And almoſt all " Expoſitors, who liv'd long ſince thoſe Times " (*when the Eclipſe happen'd*) were of Opinion, " that the Sun contracted or refus'd its Rays, " for *three* † *Hours*, until the *Ninth* ‖. But " *here* indeed we are told, after what a *ſtrange*

S " man-

* There was no Controverſy about St. *Luke's* Hour, or when the Eclipſe began, but about the *Manner* of it. 'Tis *that* our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſhould have cavill'd at, ſince he was minded to invalidate the Teſtimony.

† None of the *Ancient* Commentators, it ſeems, (that *Maximus* here refers to) knew any Thing of this *Ninth Hour*, (that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* makes ſuch Sport with,) whether *Romans*, *Athenians*, or *Egyptians*.

‖ I would here obſerve, that *Maximus*, as well as the Epiſtle of *Dionyſius*, reads it ἀνάλης, (with a ſingle ν). 'Tis certain both *Heſiod* and *Homer* read it ſo likewiſe: And then how eaſy was it for Tranſcribers to miſtake in their Copies, there being ſuch a likeneſs between an ν and a κ, eſpecially when the additional Stroke in the κ ſhould happen to be loſt or obſcur'd in the Copy? But there is no need of ſuch a Conjecture here; for the Text ſtands right without it in *Dionyſius's* Epiſtle; Ἄνθις τε ἀυλὴν ἀπὸ ἕκτης ἀνάλης ὥρας ἄχρι ἕκτης ἐσπέρας εἰς τὸ τῦ ἡλίυ διάμεσρον ὑπερφυῶς ἀνλικαλαςάσαν. When one Chriſtian Biſhop was writing to another, it was needleſs to mention the *Sixth* Hour, (being well enough known from the Evangeliſts) when the Eclipſe *began*: Nor is the *Sixth* Hour accordingly mention'd in all the Epiſtle; but 'tis plainly enough underſtood. I muſt alſo frankly own, that, in my Opinion, *Æmilius Portus*, and after him *Lud. Kuſter*, were both miſtaken in tranſlating this Paſſage *ab Hora ſexta uſq; ad Veſperam*; and that the *Note* of the latter

is

" manner the Sun was eclips'd: For he ſays, " that the Moon, at the *fourteenth* Day, (when " it was no Time for the Conjunction,) came up " (from the Eaſt) with the *Sun* at the *Sixth* " *Hour*, and coinciding, ran under it, &c."

[ Σημείωσαι ἐνλεῦθεν τὴν λύσιν τῦ παρὰ τῷ Ευαγγελιςῆ λκκᾷ ἀπωρήμαλος. Οὐδεὶς ϗ τὸ ζένον τῦ τρόπε κ) τῦ θαύμαλος ὀνηγήσαλο, εἰ μὴ μόνΘ ἔτΘ. τῦ γὸ θείε Λκκᾶ εἰπόνλΘ, ἀπὸ ς. ὥρας σκότΘ ἐν τῷ ϛαυρῷ τῦ κυρίε γενέϑαι, τῦ ἡλίε ἐκλείπονλΘ, παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀμφεβάλλέτο πῶς ἐκλειψιν ἐκαλεσε ταύτην, τῆς σελήνης τεσσαρεσκαιδεκαλιαιας ὕσης, ἐ μὴν συνόδε ὐσης ἡλίε κ) σελήνης. Οἱ γὸ ἐξηγηλαὶ σχεδὸν πάνλες μελαγενέςεροι πολλῷ τῶν χρόνων τέτων ὄνλες, ὑπέλαβον ϯ ἥλιον ἀνλὸν ἀποβαλεῖν τὰς ἀκλῖνας ἰὰς ἰρεῖς ὥρας, ἕως τῆς ἐνάτης. Ἐνλαῦθα μέντοι κ) ὁ ζένΘ τρόπΘ εἴρηλαι τῆς ἐκλείψεως. Φησὶν γὰρ, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀναλολῶν τεσσαρεσκαιδεκαλια ὕσα (ἐ γὸ ἦν συνόδε καιρὸς) ἐφθάσεν ὥραν ς. τὸν ἥλιον, κ) ἐμπεσῦσα εἰς ἀνλὸν ὑπέδεμεν, &c ]

As to the other Commentator, *Pachymere*, he ſpeaks plain enough, you know, in Mr. *W*'s Collection; and leſs than one *fourth* Part of his Quotation *(p.* 19.) is ſufficient for our preſent Purpoſe. *The Wonder was,* (ſays *Pachymere*) *that the Eclipſe laſted from the* Sixth Hour *to the* Ninth; *and from the* Ninth Hour *till the Evening, the Moon was diametrically oppoſite to the Sun.* Here you have the Caſe clearly ſtated in a nar-

is there *improper*: For the *Fact* relating to the Space of Time between the *Sixth* and *Ninth* Hour, is told juſt before, *viz.* the *Moon's coinciding with the Sun for* three *Hours till the* ninth, (ſays the *Scholiaſt*,) though the *Sixth* Hour be not mention'd; nor was it neceſſary; as I have ſaid already.

a narrow Compaſs; and the Words of *Dionyſius*, as well as *Suidas*'s Extracts, ſet in their proper Light. [Καὶ τὸ θαυμάσιον ὅτι ἡ ἔκλειψις ἐγένετο ἀπὸ ὥρας ϛ. ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης. Καὶ ἀπ' ἐνάτης ὥρας ἕως ἑσπέρας πάλιν καλὰ διάμετρον τῷ Ἡλίῳ ἡ Σελήνη ἐγένετο. Pachym. Paraph. in Ep. Dionyſ. ad Polyc.] Now, after all this, who can forbear reflecting upon ſuch groſs *Inſincerity*? I wonder to hear Mr. *W.* talking of his own *Honour*, in taxing our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* with blundering in this Particular; when, you ſee, 'tis evidently a *premeditated Colluſion*: *That Honour*, methinks, had been much better ſecur'd, if he had ſpoke out plainly, what he himſelf knew to be *true*.

*B.* Sir, you may ſpare your *Reflections* as to our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*; for, I dare ſay, when the judicious Part of Mankind comes to know the Truth of this Matter, they will make *them* faſt enough. You have ſaid ſo much of this Epiſtle of *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*; of its great *Antiquity*; and the Eſteem the learned World has ſhewn for it, ſo many Ages paſt; that you have rais'd in me a Curioſity of knowing the Contents of it. If *it* be only concerning a Matter of *Fact*, viz. *the Moon's interpoſing, and then retiring in a wonderful Manner*; are we to call it *ſpurious* on this Account? don't we meet with *Facts* of the like nature in the Old Teſtament? Why may not *this* wonderful Proceeding of the Creator be here ſuppos'd, when we read of ſo many more *Wonders* at the ſame Time attending our Saviour's Crucifixion? And how comes it that

ſuch an *Explication* of the *Wonder* ſhou'd not have been queſtion'd by *Maximus* and other learned Men, in thoſe early Days of Chriſtianity? 'Tis plain they knew better, and highly approv'd of the *Explication*. The *Wonders* in the Old Teſtament led 'em more eaſily to the Acknowledgment of *this*, at a Time when there was to be a *Complication of Miracles*, as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, tho' *ſcoffingly* *, expreſſes himſelf upon this Occaſion. Sir, I can't but renew my Requeſt; for knowing the Contents of this Epiſtle, at leaſt, ſo much as relates to this *wonderful Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Paſſion, I ſuppoſe the Infidel *Apollophanes* took a great deal of Liberty, in *Smyrna*, in aſperſing *Dionyſius* for his Credulity, after having heard *Paul* preaching *Jeſus* and the *Reſurrection*; which occaſioned this Letter (as I take it) being written to the Biſhop of that Place by *Dionyſius* in his own Juſtification: But I want to know, if you pleaſe, firſt of all, whether there be the like Marks of *Spuriouſneſs* to be found in *this* Epiſtle, as there are ſaid to be in ſeveral other Pieces aſcribed to *Dionſiyus* the *Areopagite*.

*A.* There is not any *ſuch Mark*, I do aſſure you, unleſs the miraculous Motion of the *Moon* muſt be deemed as *ſuch*. But why the *Moon* ſhould not have its Share amongſt the other *Wonderful* Things done at our Saviour's Paſſion, is what our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* (I dare ſay) can aſſign no Reaſon for; and therefore,

* Page 69.

fore, methinks, he was too haſty in calling it a *Romance*; whatever Thanks he may have for it, from our *Deiſts* and *Free-Thinkers*. When the ſupreme Governor of the Univerſe was putting Nature out of its Courſe, is it not eaſy, nay, more probable to ſuppoſe, that the *Moon* ſhould ſhew a *Diſorder* likewiſe, than that *it* ſhould continue a *regular* Motion for thoſe *three Hours* of Darkneſs; and that it ſhould ſome Way contribute to that *Darkneſs*, tho' *it* was not *in itſelf* naturally ſufficient to make the Darkneſs *univerſal*, that Deficiency being eaſily ſupplied by the ſame Almighty Power? The Words in *Africanus* ſeem, to me, to countenance this *Explication* of the Eclipſe, when he ſays, ὡς τι κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν; which Mr. *W.* tranſlates, *it being juſt like it* [a ſolar Eclipſe] *in Appearance*. Now, how could this be? How could a preternatural Eclipſe be *juſt like* a natural one *in Appearance*; if *Origen*, or rather his *Wiſemen*, ſay truly, *that the Clouds were ſo thick, that the Rays of the Sun it ſelf were obſtructed by them? Origen*, indeed, could not talk in this Manner; for in his Diſpute wirh *Celſus*, he quotes *Phlegon*; and *Phlegon* ſays expreſsly, *that the Stars appeared in the Heavens*; ſo that it muſt have been the Opinion of *Origen's* FREE-THINKERS, and not his own. And yet, how does our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, upon this Occaſion, with the moſt notorious *Inſincerity*, charge *this* upon *Origen*, when he knew the Caſe to be otherwiſe? "*Phlegon* ſays, *That the Stars appeared in the*

"*Heavens*

" *Heavens* (ſo argues our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, Page " 30.) during his Eclipſe; whereas, *Origen* " *ſays* the Clouds were ſo thick, that the Rays " of the Sun itſelf were obſtructed by them."

*B.* Sir, I am almoſt ſick with this Writer's *Inſincerity*. You need not remark any Thing farther upon it. But, as to your Quotation from *Africanus*; why may not the *Words* be taken to ſignify no more, than that it was the *Darkneſs only*, and nothing elſe, that made it *juſt like a natural Eclipſe, in Appearance*?

*A.* The Darkneſs *only* cannot properly (I think) juſtify the Expreſſion in *Africanus*; and if there was nothing more required, in the preſent Caſe, to make the *Reſemblance*, our *dark* Nights may be ſaid to have the *Appearance* of an Eclipſe, when, by the orbicular Form of the Earth, we are deprived of the Sun's Light. The Words then κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν, ſeem to imply thus much, That, there being a ſerene clear Sky, and the Stars appearing when this *Darkneſs* happened, the Eclipſe was *(to look at it)* juſt like a *natural* one, when the Moon is in Conjunction with the Sun, *i. e.* there was an *opague* Body that did interpoſe in a wonderful Manner, for the Space of *three Hours*: It was juſt like a natural Eclipſe, as to the *Manner* of the Sun's *Obſcurity*, in *that* it was ἔν τι κατὰ τὴν ὄψιν, though in the *Duration* there was no *Likeneſs* at all. A learned *Jeſuit* * obſerves upon *Mat.* xxvii. 45. whereas the *Moon* did thus miraculouſly coincide with the Sun, and yet the Sun would

* Corn. à Lapide,

would not thereby be *totally* eclipſed, as the Caſe was at the *Paſſion*; that this is beſt accounted for in thoſe Expreſſions uſed by St. *Jerom*, *Cyprian*, and *Chryſoſtom*. St. *Jerom* ſays, *that the Sun* (in his Opinion) *drew back its Rays*; and the other *two* ſpeak much after the ſame Manner †. But obſerve, I am here only indulging a Conjecture: However, had *Africanus* been in *Egypt* at the Time and Place that the *Areopagite* was, and it had been recorded that he made the like Obſervations, I cannot ſee, why ſuch a wonderful Account given, ſhould be interpreted as a Mark of *Spuriouſneſs*: And therefore, I am, for my own Part, inclined to believe, that ſome *genuine* Pieces of the true *Dionyſius*, might for a long Time lie buried in Oblivion; that they were afterwards blended with other Pieces, manifeſtly *ſuppoſitious*; and that the *Collector* being fond (as well he might) of having ſo great a *Name* for uſhering them into the World, unadviſedly did it, without any Diſcrimination made in the Affair. That there was ſuch a Perſon as *Apollophanes*, Contemporary with the *Areopagite*, no body will deny: *Suidas* tells us, that the *Areopagite* (in *Tiberius*'s Reign) went into *Egypt*, to converſe with the Wiſemen of that Country; that *Apollophanes* the Sophiſt went with him; and that this *Apollophanes* inſtructed one *Polemo*; which *Polemo* was afterwards *Ariſtides*'s Maſter. And *Pachymere*

† Id autem factum eſt hac ratione, quod Sol, ea parte *qua Luna non tegebatur*, Deo agente, ſubtraxerit radios ſuos a Terra *Chriſticida*. *Corn. à Lap.*

*Pachymere* ſays, moreover, that it was uſual *then* (or at that Time) among the *Greeks* to travel from every Place into *Egypt*, for the ſake of Learning. It is not then to be queſtioned, but that our *Areopagite* and *Apollophanes* were together in *Egypt*, when this wonderful Eclipſe happened. The *Areopagite* being afterwards converted, and *Apollophanes* continuing hardened in his Infidelity at *Smyrna*; what is more natural to ſuppoſe, than that the *Sophiſt* (like a *T——n——liſt* now a Days) might be *very free* in his Reflections upon the *Areopagite's* Conduct; and this *Freedom* might occaſion the *Apologetique* Epiſtle, we are ſpeaking of? It muſt then be owned, as highly probable, that *ſuch* an Epiſtle was writ; and if ſo, why may not *that* Epiſtle which we now have be *genuine*; though we ſhould *ſuppoſe* neither *Euſebius*, St. *Jerom*, nor *Gennadius* KNEW any Thing of it, as the famous *Dallee* earneſtly contends *? *Dallee*, indeed, is known to have laboured the Point more than any other, in detecting the *counterfeit Areopagite*. His Arguments drawn from the *Cœleſtial Hierarchy*, *&c.* are ſolid and good. *Du-Pin* himſelf has uſed them; and who does not

* Uterque (Hieronymus & Gennadius) *Dionyſiana* æque ac Euſebius tacuit. Quid ergo? *Arianiſnè* vel Hieronymus vel Gennadius faverunt? Stultum eſt vel hoc quærere. Atqui ſi *Dionyſiana* ne ii quidem memorant, quos ab *Arianiſmo* plane penituſque alienos fuiſſe conſtat, profectò cur *Dionyſiana* Euſebius tacuerit, nullum *Arianiſmi* ſtudium cauſa fuit, ſed aliquid aliud quod utrorumque, *Arianiſmo* ſcilicet vel faventium, vel adverſantium, commune fuit. Id verò aliud eſſe non poteſt, niſi hoc unum; quod nimirum *Dionyſiana*, & Euſebius Arianorum fautor, & Hieronymus, Gennadiuſque ab iis alieni, utrique juxta, pariterque neſcierunt. Jo. *Dallæus* de Scriptis Pſeud. *Dionyſ.* Cap. 6. p. 28. De *Euſebii* Arianiſmo, vide Ep. Apologet. V. Cl. Gul. *Cave*,

not agree to them? I will not lay much Stress neither, upon what some have argued about the *Arians* having suppressed these Works of *Dionysius*; and, I think, as *Pere Halloix* does, † that *Eusebius* is wrongfully charged in that Particular: But then, I must think that the *Arians* in general, when they had it in their *Power*, never wanted the *Will* to suppress any Thing that made against them. So *bad* a *Cause*, as theirs is, always makes it necessary: And I shall have Occasion to shew you, in a very little Time, that our modern *Arians*, and *Semi-Arians*, are so bent upon this dirty Work, that they will venture to give their *English* Reader *partial* Representations, and *half Sentences* from the ancient *Fathers*, and other Writers too; though they know, at the same Time, that it is not in their *Power* to conceal this for any *long* Term. However the Case then be, as to suppressing or concealing these Works ascribed to *Dionysius* in general, we see, that *Maximus* (who lived in the *sixth* and *seventh* Centuries) had not the worse Opinion of *this Epistle* for the *Miracle* it mentioned; and believed it to have lain concealed by one Means or other. "Almost all Expositors, says he, who lived "long since those Times *(when the Eclipse hap-* "*pened)* were of Opinion, that the Sun con- "tracted or refused ‖ its Rays for *three* Hours, "until the *ninth*." But here *(by the* Areopa-

T gite,

† *Halloix. de operibus Dion.* q. 72. p. 35.

‖ Ἀποβαλειν τὰς ἀκτίνας.

" gite, *an Eye-Witneſs*) we are told (ſays he) after what *a ſtrange Manner* the Sun was eclipſed. The long Time of this Epiſtle's diſappearing in the World, (if that was really the Caſe,) is no more an Objection to the *Genuineſs* of *it*, than it is to the *Commentaries* of *Caſſiodorus*, which, having lain dormant near twelve hundred Years, were lately happily reſcued from Darkneſs, as I told you this Morning; and which I am to give you an Account of at our next Meeting. Thus I have very briefly anſwered your Query about the *Spuriouſneſs* of this particular Epiſtle. I ſee no *Marks* of it myſelf; but ſhall not determine any Thing farther about it. It is an Affair that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has not entered into himſelf, and therefore I am not concerned to purſue it any farther; nor ſhould I have thought it neceſſary to have ſaid ſo much, had he not at Random given *it* the modeſt Appellation of a *Romance*. My Buſineſs was (and, I hope, I have done it to your Satisfaction) to ſhew, that this Epiſtle does not make the Eclipſe *to begin at the ninth Hour, or at nine o'Clock in the Morning*, as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* [p. 62.] expreſsly charges; and I have ſhewn, at the ſame Time, whilſt I have vindicated the Writer of this Epiſtle from any ſuch *Abſurdity*, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has been moſt notoriouſly *inſincere* in the *Charge* that he has made himſelf: I will now proceed in acquitting myſelf as to the other Particular you requeſted of me, which was, to give you in

*Engliſh*

*Engliſh*, ſome of the moſt material Paſſages in this *Greek* Epiſtle. The *Areopagite* (then Biſhop of *Athens*) is vindicating himſelf, as you obſerved, againſt the Aſperſions of *Apollophanes*; and he does it in Manner following: "You tell me, (ſays he "to *Polycarp*, Biſhop of *Smyrna*,) that *Apollo-* "*phanes*, the Sophiſt, reproaches me, and calls "me a *Parricide*, as if I had offered Violence "to their *Deities*, or had not ſincerely and "honeſtly argued from the *Greek* or Gentile "Authors, in Oppoſition to themſelves: And "yet we might more truly, and with greater "Juſtice, retort *this* upon himſelf; as, that "the *Greeks* or Gentiles do not juſtly, or *re-* "*ligiouſly* argue this Way in divine Matters; "they endeavouring to aboliſh the *Divine* "Worſhip, by the Help of that *Wiſdom*, which "is the Wiſdom of God himſelf. Nor do I, "in this Caſe, mean what the Multitude ſay "about it, who are ſo groſsly attach'd to the "Works of their Poets, *ſerving the Creature* "*more than the Creator*: But *Apollophanes* him- "ſelf has not behaved *honeſtly* or *ſincerely* "in this way of arguing about divine Matters: "For *that* very *Knowledge* of Things, which "he rightly calls *Philoſophy*, and which St. "*Paul* calls the *Wiſdom of God*, ought to lead "every *true Philoſopher* to the Author or "Cauſe of ſuch Things, and of the *Knowledge* "of the Things themſelves. And, that I may "keep cloſe to the Point, in the Confutation "of him or others, *Apollophanes*, being a

" Wiſe Man, ought to have conſidered, that " there can be no Change or Variation in the " *Order* and *Motion* of the heavenly Bodies, " without the Direction of him who is the " Creator and Upholder of them; who, ac- " cording to the Scripture, *performeth and* " *transformeth all Things, as it ſeemeth beſt to* " *him.* Now, ſince from hence we know *him*, " as being verily the God of the Univerſe, " how comes it, that he (*Apollophanes*) does " not worſhip *him* as ſuch, on Account of his " Almighty and Ineffable Power? —— Tell " him from me, *thus*; What have you to ſay " [*Apollophanes*] to that *Eclipſe*, that happen'd " at our Saviour's Crucifixion? For we were " *then* both preſent, and ſtanding together, at " or near *Heliopolis*, when we ſaw the Moon " *coinciding* with the Sun in a *wonderful Man-* " *ner*; (for it was not the Time for a *Con-* " *junction*;) and from the *ninth* Hour till the " Evening, we ſaw it again as wonderfully " ſtanding diametrically * *oppoſite* to the Sun. " Put him in Mind alſo of one Thing more: " For he knows, that we ſaw the Beginning " of the *Moon*'s Entrance under the *Sun* from " the *Eaſt*, and its Progreſs quite to the Verge " of the Sun's *Diſc*, and then returning; and " farther,

* Εἰς τὸ τῦ ἡλίυ διάμετρον ἀντικαταςᾶσαν. Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* is pleaſed to tranſlate it, *from the ninth Hour quite to the Evening, ſtanding diametrically* UNDER *the Sun.* Whether this was done with *Sincerity*, let Mr. *W.* judge. Soon after, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* charges *Dionyſius* with ſaying, that the Eclipſe BEGAN at the *ninth* Hour. p. 59, 62.

" farther, we ſaw, that the *Conjunction* or Dark-
" neſs and the Sun's ſhining again, was not on
" the *ſame Side (as uſual)* but directly the
" contrary. Theſe are the Things that hap-
" pened preternaturally at that Time; poſſible
" with Chriſt *only*, the Cauſe of all Things,
" who doth Things great and wonderful, that
" are not to be numbered." Thus far the Biſhop of *Athens* to the Biſhop of *Smyrna*.

*B.* Sir, I thank you. Whatever Marks of *Spuriouſneſs* there may be in other Pieces aſcribed to the *Areopagite*, I ſee no Reaſon why our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſhould imagine, that there are *any* ſuch in this *Epiſtle*, at leaſt, in what you have cited: And for the *reſt* of it, I believe you are faithful, and would have told me, if you had judg'd it otherwiſe. Conſidering the great *Antiquity* then of this Epiſtle, (as is acknowledged on all Hands,) I muſt highly reverence it, whoever was the Author. I obſerve, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* takes no Notice of the laſt Sentence, which you cite from this Epiſtle. This occaſions ſome Speculation; and, perhaps, was the Reaſon, why he quoted *Suidas*, rather than the Epiſtle itſelf. I forbear making any farther Enquiry about that Matter, but chuſe rather to remind you of the *Chineſe* Affair: namely, whether there be any ſort of *Proof* amongſt thoſe People, that they had formerly a Knowledge of a *crucified* Saviour? and whether, in particular, this preternatural Eclipſe is, or has been taken Notice of in their *Annals?* I ſhould

be

be pleaſed to ſee this Matter farther enquired into; and the more ſo, becauſe, as I have told you already, both Mr. *W.* and our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſeem to make a *Jeſt* of it; and the latter (I find) would have the *like Credit* given to the Accounts from *thence*, as to the Accounts given by *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, upon the ſame Subject.

*A.* You muſt remember, when I had the Favour of your Company, ſome Time ago, in this Room, I told you, * that it was a Subject of ſome Importance; and that (in my Opinion) it might be much for the Honour of the Chriſtian Religion, to have *it* farther enquired into. Your Sentiments were then the ſame, and we agreed to drop it for the preſent. I have now ſomething more to offer to your Conſideration; and what, I hope, may give you ſome Satisfaction in theſe *two* very Particulars, that you now deſire to be ſatisfied in. The firſt Thing I have to offer, is an *Account* lately † tranſmitted to the *Royal Society*, or an *Explanation of the new chronological Table of the* CHINESE HISTORY, *tranſlated into Latin from the* ORIGINAL CHINESE; and it will thence appear, from their own ancient *Language* itſelf, that they had a Knowledge of a *crucified* Saviour. The other Thing that I ſhall offer, are two

* Part I. p. 43, 44, 45.

† See *Philoſophical Tranſactions* for the Months of *September* and *October*, 1730. p. 397, &c. one of the *original* CHINESE Tables, printed at *Canton*, has been preſented to the Society, by Sir *Thomas Dereham*, and is now repoſited in their Library.

two *Diſſertations*, written by two learned *Chineſe Fathers*, *pro* and *con*, upon this very Subject, *viz.* whether the *preternatural Eclipſe*, that happened at Chriſt's Paſſion, ever was, or is entered in the *Chineſe Annals*. But, before I treat of theſe Things any farther, I deſire you would recollect what has paſt between us this Day, in *general*, relating to ſuch *extenſive Darkneſs*. I think, by *comparing* the Expreſſions uſed by the *Ancients*, on that Account, (as we did about Half an * Hour ago) it may reaſonably be concluded, that this *Darkneſs* was *univerſal*; and I deſire you will now carry in your Mind, the particular Expreſſion of St. *Chryſoſtom*, † *viz.* "That this Darkneſs was "over all the habitable Earth; that it came "at *Noon*, that all the Inhabitants of the Earth "might learn by it: For it was *Day-Time* "*every where* in the habitable Earth." Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s Obſervation here is this; "*Pekin* || (ſays he) lies in ſuch a Degree of "Latitude, that in the very Beginning of "*April*, the Sun ſets at near, if not full *ſeven* "o'Clock; and conſequently they [*the Chineſe*] "might have ſeen it [*the Eclipſe*] during its "*whole Progreſs*." Mr. *W.* expreſſes himſelf ** thus; "Nor could a *Darkneſs*, viſible at "the Meridian of *Jeruſalem*, from Noon to "three o'Clock in the Afternoon, be ſeen *long* "at

* Page
† In *Mat.* xxvii. 45.
|| Page 87.
** Page 28.

" at the Meridian of *China*; becauſe the *Sun* " was there ſet, when about *three quarters of* " *an Hour* of that three Hours Darkneſs was " over; and all the reſt of the Time it was " under their Horizon." Theſe Gentlemen both ſay enough for our preſent Purpoſe; only remember what St. *Chryſoſtom* ſays, *It was Day-time every where in the Habitable Earth.* As to Mr. *W*'s Objection, about the *Bible*'s not taking in *China*, when 'tis ſaid the *whole Earth*, I believe you think it too weak, eſpecially after what has been obſerv'd already *, to need any Anſwer at all.

*B.* I do not well ſee how Mr. *W.* is very conſiſtent with himſelf, in talking about this *Chineſe* Affair. He calls them *very weak People*, who have intereſted themſelves in Defence of this Story from *China*; and yet, but two or three Pages farther †, he bids his Reader in other Matters, *take the Judgment of the very learned Huetius.* Now *Huetius*, you know, with all his Judgment hearken'd very much to the *China Story*, as Mr. *W.* calls it. You read to me out of him this Morning ‖, I remember, Words to this Effect: " Nothing more deſerves a nice and ac- " curate Obſervation, as to this Affair, than " what is related in the *Chineſe* Hiſtory lately " written by *Hadrian Greſton*, viz. It there " ſtands recorded among the *Chineſe*, at that ve- " ry Time that correſponds with the XXXIId Year

* Page .
† Page 31.
‖ Page .

" Year of the Chriſtian *Æra*, about the Month of " *April*, that there happen'd a *Solar Eclipſe*, " *contrary to the Laws of Nature* and the regu- " lar Motions of the Planets; at which ſtrange " Occurrence their Emperor QUAM-VUTI was " very much diſturb'd". I can't but obſerve the ſhort Method Mr. *W* takes for confuting this *Chineſe* Account: 'Tis ſhort indeed, and a very odd one too. " *It* was about the *New Moon*, and " ſo could not be this Eclipſe, which was at the " *Full*; and as it came on ſomewhat ſooner than " the Calculation, it was therefore, no doubt, " a natural Eclipſe of the Sun, whoſe Calcula- " tion had probably been careleſly made; and " yet the Aſtronomers were loth to confeſs it, " leſt they ſhould have been capitally puniſh'd". I believe you never met with ſo ſtrong an *Ipſe-dixit* before in ſo few Words; nothing being brought to ſupport it; no *Hiſtorian* of any ſort quoted; no *Chineſe* Tables referr'd to; nor any Adjuſtment of *Time* made by himſelf; and yet all theſe Things were but neceſſary to induce his Reader to hearken to him. This makes me the more deſirous to hear the *Authorities* you are going to produce concerning theſe Things: And I hope you will not defer giving me the Pleaſure any longer.

*A.* I am under ſome Concern, that I cannot *now* talk to you upon this Affair out of *Pere Greſlon*, (mention'd by *Huetius*,) not having yet been able to obtain a Sight of that Hiſtory; but I make no queſtion, againſt our next meeting, I

ſhall be in a Condition to do it; and then, I hope to do Juſtice to *Dom. de Colonia*, who, I ſuſpect, is not well uſed by our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*. From the *Authorities* then, I have already propos'd to lay before you, take as follows; The two *Accounts* of the *new Chronological Table*, &c. (one of them tranſmitted by *Pere Guillemeau*, a *Barnabite* at *Paris*, to Sir *Hans Sloane* Bart. Pr. R. S.) inform us, that the *Memoirs* on *China* *, which have made ſome Noiſe in the World, are without Foundation of Truth, in regard to the true *Epoque* of the *Chineſe* Hiſtory; that the *Chronology*, which the Author of theſe *Memoirs* declares for, is not built on any Obſervation of *Eclipſes*; that the *Eclipſes* mark'd in that Author's Chronology, and the other Aſtronomical Characters by which he would fain eſtabliſh it, are contradicted by the *Tables* and *Calculations* of the moſt learned Aſtronomers of theſe later Times; that there is nothing, that is certainly of *Confucius*, to ſerve as *Proof* for a Chronology, that is manifeſtly *imaginary*; that ſeveral Treatiſes aſcrib'd to *Confucius*, as they appear'd in the World *many Ages* after the Death of *that* Philoſopher, are to be ſuſpected as Apocryphal; that ſuch Treatiſes are generally rejected by the moſt able of the *Chineſe*; being full of Circumſtances which thoſe learned Men deny, or at leaſt call in doubt. We are, after this, more particularly inform'd of

* Pere *Le Comte* Nouveaux Memoires ſur l'Etat preſent de la *Chine*.

of the *true Epoque* of the *Chineſe* Hiſtory, fix'd by ſome of their *own* Writers, at a ſmall Number of Centuries before *Jeſus Chriſt*. Among theſe is the Compiler of a *New Chronological Table* of the *Chineſe* Hiſtory, publiſh'd in *Latin* by Father *Fouquet*, (Soc. Jeſ.) the preſent Biſhop of *Eleutheropolis*, who has liv'd near *Twenty-three* Years in *China*. The *Chineſe Original* is owing to the Learned *Nien Hi Yao*, a *Tartar*, illuſtrious by Birth and Merit, and Viceroy of *Canton* in the Year 1724. This Gentleman tells us, that he has taken this *Chronological Syſtem* from the moſt valued Hiſtorical Work in his * Country. What renders this Writer praiſe-worthy, is his ranging his Syſtem in a beautiful Order; which gives an extream Facility of ſeeing at firſt Sight the Series of the *Dynaſties*, or Imperial Houſes; the Names and Succeſſion of the *Emperors*; the Beginning, End, and Duration of each of their *Reigns*. *Se ma quang* and *Tchu Hi*, the two graveſt Hiſtorians *China* has produced, were Followers of this *Syſtem*: The firſt flouriſh'd in the Year of Chriſt 1061; the other about the end of the *Twelfth* Century. They have both omitted whatever is *before* the Time of *Guei lie Wang*, a Prince ſo call'd, who began his *Reign* 424 Years before the vulgar *Æra*. Now, by fixing this *Epoque* at *Guei lie Wang*, fabulous Times, and a thouſand Errors and Abſurdities current in *Europe*, are retrench'd. Theſe



* *China* is now the Country of theſe *Tartars*, who were born there ſince the Conqueſt, that is, about Ninety Years ſince.

Errors will ſoon vaniſh of their own accord; ſo that the Subject of ſo much laborious, but uſeleſs Lucubration and Study, will at length ceaſe: A worthy Motive for congratulating the learned World.

*B.* Your Author's *Apparatus*, Sir, is curious, and I like it very well; but you don't uſe to be ſo long, before you come to the *main Point*; which, I do aſſure you, I'm waiting for with ſome ſort of Impatience: However, pleaſe to take your own Time; and I don't queſtion but you have a Reaſon for what you are a-doing.

*A.* The Nature of the Subject we are upon, or the *main Point*, (as you call it,) does, in my Opinion, require ſuch a *Preliminary*: I'll ſhorten it as much as I can. Pleaſe to obſerve farther, that in this *New Chronological Table* is placed the *Cycle* of *Sixty* Years, call'd KIA TSE; ſo much eſteem'd by the *Chineſe*, that it is as the Soul, Link, and Foundation of their whole *Chronology*; a Point, which requires Explanation. The *Chineſe* are not acquainted with our *Olympiads*; but from Time out of Mind they have uſed this Period of *LX* Years, which is of as great Service at leaſt as the *Olympiads*, or the moſt celebrated Periods among the *Greeks*. As we mark the Incidents of ancient Hiſtory by the Years of the *Olympiads*, ſo the *Chineſe* mark what has happen'd in their Country by the Years of *this Revolution*. This general *Epoque*, as has been ſaid already, is the firſt Year of *Guei lie Wang*. Every Year of the *Chineſe* Cycle is mark'd

mark'd by *two Letters*, which make up its proper *Character*, and diſtinguiſh it from the other *LIX.* Thus the *firſt* Year (as the *Table* ſhews) is call'd *Kia Tſe*, and gives its Name to the whole *Cycle.* Thus the *Fifty-ſecond* Year of the *fourth Cycle*, in which the Prince, who finiſh'd the *great* * *Wall*, began his Reign, is call'd *Y mao.* Here a Queſtion naturally ariſes concerning the *Signification* of theſe *Characteriſticks*, which diſtinguiſh the Years of the *Cycle* and Emperors; and it muſt be pleaſing to the Reader to dive into *their* true Senſe. It is to be wiſh'd, it were as eaſy to anſwer this Queſtion, as 'tis natural to propoſe it; but it regards *Characters* ſo infinitely different from ours, that their Nature or Origin have never been well extricated. Yet ſince an Anſwer muſt be given; to lead the Reader by Degrees to the Knowledge of ſo new a Subject, we muſt remark, *1ſt*, That it is not poſſible to give theſe *Names* any Tranſlation: *Kia Tſe* will ſtill be *Kia Tſe* in all Languages: *Y mao* will ſtill be *Y mao*, and ſo the other LVIII *Names*: And this no *European*, that underſtands the *Chineſe* Tongue, will contradict. *2dly*, That theſe *Names* are compos'd of *two* ſorts of *Characters* † very famous among the *Chineſe*, who get them by heart in their Youth, and employ them on a thouſand Occaſions. Theſe

* This great Wall juſtly paſſes for one of the *Wonders* of the World, beginning at the *Eaſtern* Sea, and extending to near *Thibet*, 500 French Leagues.

† Theſe *Characters* are to be ſeen in the Plate annex'd to this Account in the Philoſophical Tranſactions, as above cited.

Theſe of the firſt ſort are *ten* in number, and are call'd the *Year Letters*; theſe of the ſecond, *twelve*, and are named *Hour Letters*. 3*dly*, That theſe two ſorts of *Characters* are combined, by repeating the *ten Year Letters* ſix times, and the *twelve Hour Letters* but five Times; for ſix times Ten, and five Times Twelve, equally make Sixty: And from this Combination reſult LX *Names* for the LX *Years* that compoſe the *Cycle*.

*B.* I ſuppoſe, theſe *three Points* well comprehended ſuffice for the Uſe and Underſtanding of the *Chronological Table*. Methinks, this is a very dry ſort of Learning; it does not enlighten the Underſtanding. Theſe *Names*, as far as I can yet ſee, remain unintelligible, and the Reader's Curioſity is not ſatisfied.

*A.* True: But will it be more ſo, by adding what the *Chineſe* take out of their *Traditions*? No one can eaſily believe that *theſe Words* are void of all *Meaning*, or that the *Letters*, whoſe Names they are, are Figures made at hazard, or arbitrarily imagin'd. The Inventor of theſe *Names* muſt have propos'd to himſelf ſome *End*.

*B.* I now begin to perceive what your Diſcourſe is tending to: Pray, oblige me with a Sight of theſe *Characters*. They are indeed very odd; but, no doubt, as you ſay, there was an *End* propos'd when they were firſt invented, and had each of them ſome *Signification* or other.

*A.* It

*A.* It is already known in general, and is demonſtrated elſewhere, that the *Characters* preſerv'd by the *Chineſe* (but much more *ancient* than them) are true *Hieroglyphicks*. It is likewiſe known, and ſtrongly demonſtrated, that the *Doctrine*, veil'd under the Appearance of theſe *Hieroglyphicks*, is very myſterious and ſublime; and it is *unreaſonable* to regard as *Nonſenſe*, and reject *ſuch* as we underſtand not, purely becauſe we do not underſtand them. "And in-
" deed, when we cloſely examine the XXII
" *Letters* in queſtion, we perceive in ſeveral of
" them ſomewhat very *myſterious*, which the
" *Chineſe* themſelves preſent us with, *without*
" *underſtanding them*. For Example, Tse, the
" firſt of the *Hour Letters*, ſignifies with the
" *Chineſe* both the *Moment* of *Midnight*, and a
" *tender Babe* juſt born, wrap'd up in his Baby-
" Clothes. Again, Ou, the ſeventh of the *Hour-*
" *Letters*, ſignifies the *Moment* of *Noon*, and *a*
" *Man lifted on a Croſs*. This Letter ſignifies
" *Noon*, according to the primitive Meaning;
" which ſtill ſubſiſts without ever having been
" diſuſed: It alſo ſignifies a Man lifted on a
" *Croſs*, as is evident to the Eye of any Perſon
" who has the firſt tincture of the *Characters*.
" Now, *where* have this People got ſuch Ideas?
" They are *incomprehenſible* to them at pre-
" ſent; and yet (it is ſtrange!) they preſerve
" them preciouſly, and uſe their utmoſt Endea-
" vours to find out the Senſe of them, but to

'no

" no purpoſe. That TSE ſignifies both *Mid-*
" *night* and an *Infant* juſt come to the World;
" that Ou marks *Noon* and a *Man* lifted on a
" *Croſs*, are *Facts* cited, as they are found in the
" *Chineſe Vocabularies*, without Comments, Con-
" jectures, or any other of one's private Thoughts;
" which ſhou'd be the more ſurprizing to the
" Reader. It will increaſe the Surprize, to re-
" flect on a *Chineſe Axiom*; the Senſe whereof
" is, that the Heavens *opened* at the Hour of
" TSE; which, according to the foregoing Ex-
" poſition, ought to be underſtood of the *Mo-*
" *ment* of *Midnight*. And in order to raiſe the
" Admiration a Degree higher, TSE, which ſig-
" nifies an *Infant*, is literally and properly uſed
" to ſignify *Son*. Now let the Reader give At-
" tention to the ſurprizing Words of a *Chineſe*
" Writer on this *Son*. *The firſt Inſtant* (ſays he)
" *of the Production of Things, their Principle and*
" *Origin came from the* SON. *The* SON *is the*
" *Cauſe by which all Things had a Beginning.*"
I could proceed farther, if it was neceſſary; but I hope there is enough ſaid, from this curious Treatiſe, to make it highly probable to any reaſonable Perſon, that the *Chineſe* had formerly a Knowledge of a *crucify'd Saviour*.

*B.* Sir, I don't doubt, but *this Account* has its due Weight with the *Royal Society*. The *Chineſe* are a People, I have ever had in great Veneration; and their *Antiquity* is ſuch, that (as *Pere le Comte* expreſſes it)

" * 'tis

" * 'Tis as difficult to trace their *Origin*, as 'tis " *that* of the great Rivers. The Children or " Grandchildren of *Noah* (as he ſays) ſeem to " have ſpread themſelves to the Weſtern Parts " of *China*". This *Authority* then that you have produced from their own *Language*, join'd with *that* you have produced from the *Fathers*, and other ancient Writers, ſeems to put the Matter out of all Doubt, whether our *Lord's Paſſion*, and the wonderful *Darkneſs*, were Things known to the *Chineſe*, or no: And therefore I am leſs ſollicitous about the *other* Particular, *viz*, Whether their *Annals* ever *did*, or do now, bear Witneſs to any *ſuch Darkneſs*. However, pleaſe to let me know, whether you have any Thing to offer in Defence of what you formerly advanc'd upon that Subject; for I cannot help thinking, as the great *Huetius* did, that it *deſerves* the niceſt and moſt accurate Enquiry that's poſſible.

*A.* As to this *laſt* Particular you mention, you may remember, I juſt hinted to you, ſome little Time ago, that there are *two* Diſſertations, (the *one* publiſhed ſince the laſt Viſit I paid you,) written by two learned *Chineſe Fathers* †,



* Les *Chinois* ſont ſi anciens dans le Monde, qu'il en eſt de leur Origine comme de ces grand Fleuves, dont on ne peut preſque découvrir la Source. —— Il y a de l'apparence que les Enfans ou les petits Fils de *Noé* ſe répendirent dans l'*Aſie* & percérent enfin juſques dans cette partie de *la Chine* qui eſt la plus Occidentale, & qu'on nomme à preſent le *Chanſi* & le *Chenſi*. Voyez *Memoires* de la *Chine* par Pere le *Comte*, en Lettre a Monſ. le Marq. de *Torſi* Secretaire d'Etat. *&c.*

† Vid. Pere *Souciet* Obſervations Mathematiques, Aſtronom. &c. tirées des anciens Livres *Chinois*, Tom. II. p. 163, 164, &c.

(*Peres Bouvet* and *Gaubil*,) on both Sides of the Queſtion, *viz.* Whether, the *preternatural Eclipſe*, that happened at *Chriſt*'s Paſſion, ever was, or now ſtands entered in the *Chineſe Annals*. *Pere Gaubil* oppoſes the Hiſtory of *Hadrian Greſlon*, in this Particular, and *Pere Bouvet* defends it. *P. Gaubil* obſerves firſt, from the *Chineſe Text*, "that there was an "Eclipſe of the Sun in the *ſeventh Year*; the "*third Moon*, and the laſt Day, QUEY-HAY †." Then remarks, that this *ſeventh Year* is to be underſtood in relation to the *Reign* of the Emperor QUANG-VOU-TI; and affirms, that this *ſeventh Year* does certainly correſpond with, or anſwer to the XXXIſt Year of the *Vulgar Æra*. The 10th of *May*, in the XXXIſt Year of *Jeſus Chriſt*, is the only Day that could have been the *firſt* of the *Moon*, and at the ſame Time be called QUEY-HAY; and there is no other Day but *that*, when we find an *Eclipſe* viſible at *Loyang*, (the Emperor *Quang-vou-ti*'s Palace,) diſtinguiſhed by ſeveral other Circumſtances that are taken || Notice of in the Text. Next to the *Text*, there is an *aſtronomical* Note, in which are quoted theſe Words of TSIEN-TAN-PA; *Upon the Day* QUEY-HAY *there was an Eclipſe of the Sun: The heavenly*

† That is, ſays *Gaubil*, the *ſixtieth Day* of the *Cycle* of LX Days. Les deux Caracteres QUEY-HAY ou KOUEI-HAI ſont ceux du ſoixantième jour du *Cycle* de 60 jours.

|| Pere *Gaubil* here refers his Reader to a *Table* of *Latitudes* and *Longitudes*; which we meet with in the firſt Tom. p. 251, &c.

*heavenly* * (or divine) *Man falls dead. Pere Gaubil* gives Inſtances of *two Eclipſes*, the one happening 668, the other 626 *Years before* Jeſus Chriſt; to both which TSIEN-TAN-PA applies his TCHEN, † or *Divination*: And in the Commentary it is remarked, *that the Eclipſe of the Day* QUEY-HAY *denotes the Death of a heavenly* (or divine) *Man.* TSIEN-TAN-PA ſays, that an Eclipſe upon the Day *Kia-tſe*, denotes a *Revolt* among Subjects; and the eaſtern *Han* quote this *Tchen*, or Augury of *Tſien-tan-pa*, in their Account of an Eclipſe that happened upon the Day KIA-TSE. *Pere Gaubil*, having conſidered the *Text* that marks this *Eclipſe*, (agreeing to the 10th of *May* in the XXXIſt Year of the *Vulgar Æra*,) proceeds to the *hiſtorical* Part; giving an Account, from the *Chineſe* Hiſtory, what paſſed at the *Emperor's* Court *(Loyang)* after the Obſervation

 that

* Au jour QUEY-HAY il y a Eclipſe du ⊙: Le Homme céleſte tombe meurt. Pere *Gaubil* here remarks, that the *Death* of Kings and Princes is expreſſed by PENG, the Character here made uſe of.

† The TCHEN is explained by Pere *Gaubil* in the foregoing Page, thus. There is a *Court*, or *College*, to whom the Care or Buſineſs of the TCHEN is committed. The TCHEN conſiſts in examining the Relation one Star has to another, in their Situations in the Heavens; as alſo in inquiring into the *good* or *ill* aſcribed to the ſeveral *Conſtellations*, to *Days*, and to *Years* of the Cycle, to *Moons* and to *Seaſons*. After ſuch Examination and Enquiry made, they then determine what ought to be expected to befal the *Empire*, the *Royal Family*, the *Emperor* himſelf, *&c.* Whether they are to *hope* or to *fear* from a coeleſtial *Phænomenon*, ſuch as an *Eclipſe*. All this is grounded upon the Relation or Affinity, which they ſuppoſe there is between ſuch *Appearances* in the Heavens, and *human* Actions; and was formerly, more than it is at this Day, the Occaſion of an infinite deal of Superſtition.

that was made upon *it*. He informs us, that the *Emperor* ſhut himſelf up for *five Days*, *(retira cinq jours,)* that he might think of nothing but how to behave himſelf for the future in the Government of his Subjects: He alſo publiſhed an *Edict*, the Tenour of which is exactly as follows. *The Sight* * *we have had of the* Sun, *and of the* Moon, *calls upon us to bethink, or to reflect ſeriouſly with ourſelves: An Amendment of Life is neceſſary; by that Means alſo to prevent the Evils which Heaven threatens you with. As for myſelf, I can ſpeak it with great Trouble of Mind; I tremble at the Sight, or Recollection of my own Offences: My Will is, that the Nobles at my Court do give me ſincerely their Advice in Placêts, or Memorials, ſealed up: And I forbid having the Title of* Ching *given to me.* Conformably to this *Edict*, the *Nobles* gave in their *Memorials*, ſeverally *ſealed up*. One of them is ſtill preſerved in the *Chineſe* Hiſtory, offered to the Emperor by Tching-Hing; and is as follows. *According to the Rules of Aſtronomy, the* ſolar Eclipſes *ſhould not happen but upon the* firſt Day *of the* Moon: *Nevertheleſs, for ſome Years paſt, there have been ſeveral obſerved upon the* laſt Day *of the* Moon; *the Reaſon of which is, that the Moon has moved faſter,*

* La Vûë du ☉ & de la ☾ nous avértit de penſer à Nous. Il faut ſe corriger de ſes fautes, & par-là prevenir les Maux dont le Ciel vous menace. Pour Moy, à peine puis-je parler, je tremble à la vûë de més Fautes. Je veux que les Grands de ma Cour me donnent ſincerement leurs Avis dans des Placêts cachetés, & je ne veux pas qu'on me donne le titre de *Ching*.

*faſter,* || *and by that Means there has been an* Anticipation, *as to the* Time *of the Eclipſe. In the Sun we behold the Sovereign; in the Moon his Subjects. The Failures in* theſe *have generally been owing to thoſe of the Sovereign.* Pere *Gaubil* proceeds, and informs us of a ſecond *Edict* * publiſhed the 29th of *May*, of the ſame Year, the XXXIſt of *Jeſus Chriſt*; wherein are theſe Words; *The* YN *and the* YANG *do not agree; which we are given* † *to underſtand by the Eclipſe of the* SUN, *and of the* MOON. Pere *Gaubil* here comments, that YANG amongſt the *Chineſe* ſignifies that which is *above, more perfect, more grand*; and YN all that is *beneath, leſs perfect, leſs grand.* Nothing worſe digeſted or conſidered of, (ſays *Gaubil,*) or more confuſed than what the *Chineſe* talk of concerning this YN and YANG. What the Emperor Means, is to point out the *Prince* and the *Subjects* by YN and YANG; and that the Eclipſe of the Sun, cauſed by the Interpoſition of the moon, is the *Notice* that Heaven gives for *Reformation* in the Government. Pere *Gaubil* having thus given an Account (together with his own Comment)

|| Selon les Regles de l'Aſtronomie, les Eclipſes du Soleil ne doivent paroitre qu'au premier Jour de la Lune. Cependant depuis quelques Années on en voit pluſieurs au dernier Jour de la Lune; Cela vient de ce que la Lune a acceleré ſon mouvement, & par là le Temps de l'Eclipſe eſt anticipé. Le ☉ eſt l'Image du Souverain; La Lune eſt l'Image des Sujets. Les defauts de ceux-ci ont ordinairement leur ſource dans ceux du Soverain.

* La grande Hiſtoire *Chineſe*, NIEN-Y-SSE, Hiſtoire de QUANG-VOU-TI.

† L'YN & l'YANG ne ſont pas d'accord: Le POCHE du ☉ & de la ☾ nous le fait connoître.

Comment) from the *Chineſe* Hiſtory and Aſtronomy, concerning the ſolar Eclipſe in the XXXIſt Year of *Jeſus Chriſt*, upon the *laſt* Day of the third Moon: He obſerves, that *this Eclipſe* is what many *Europeans* have thought to be the *ſame* with that famous Eclipſe that was viſible at *Jeruſalem* when our Saviour ſuffered.

*B.* Sir, I don't know who this *Father Gaubil* is; nor ſhall I enquire: But if you have already done him *Juſtice*, in giving me the Strength of his Argument upon this Affair, there is no need, I ſhould think, of calling upon *Father Bouvet*, on the other Side of the Queſtion: For this Author ſeems to have produced ſuch *Authorities*, as entirely deſtroy the *Cauſe* he would maintain. The Emperor's *two Edicts* ſurely are ſufficient for that Purpoſe.

*A.* If you pleaſe, a little Patience; what you hinted at ſhall be conſidered preſently. In the mean Time, hear what *Pere Gaubil replies* to the Belief of the *Europeans* in this Matter. He ſays, " many *Miſſionaries*, that have ad-
" vanced this *Fact*, (*i. e.* the Eclipſe in *China*
" being the ſame with *that* at *Jeruſalem*) have
" not been in a Condition to *examine* all the
" Circumſtances that occur in the *Chineſe* Hiſ-
" tory and Aſtronomy. Thoſe Gentlemen, he
" ſays, had not ſuch a thorough Knowledge,
" as they ought to have had, of the *European*
" and *Chineſe* Aſtronomy; nor had they ad-
" vanced a *Fact* of ſuch Importance, but be-
" cauſe

" cauſe they knew in general, that, by the Ac-
" count of ſeveral Authors, our Lord ſuffered
" in the XXXIſt Year of the Chriſtian *Æra*;
" and they had not conſidered what the *Fact*
" implies, that our Lord ſhould then have
" died upon one of the Days QUEY-HAY, of
" the Year XXXI: They did not take No-
" tice that the *Text* ſpeaks of the *laſt* Day of
" the *third* Moon, or of the *firſt* Day of the
" *fourth* Moon: They did not mind where
" Aſtronomy had fixed the *Place* of the Sun,
" (or under what Conſtellation,) and where it
" is impoſſible it ſhould have been * upon the
" Day of the *Paſſion.*"

*A.* A good deal of this *Reply* ſounds very like the *Ipſe-dixit* that you juſtly charged Mr. *W.* with a while ago. I believe, it is not hard to prove, from the learned Works of many *Miſſionaries*, who have advanced this *Fact*, that they were thoroughly qualified in all Sorts of of Learning, and did apply themſelves in giving as good an Account as Hiſtory and Aſtronomy in *China* would allow them to do. I ſpeak this, upon the Obſervations I have made in reading ſeveral of theſe *Miſſionary* Accounts myſelf.

* Pere *Souciet* has the following *Note* upon what here is laid down by *Gaubil* " See the firſt Tome of theſe Obſervations, " p. 22, 23. where we meet with P. *Gaubil's* Calculation of this " Eclipſe, *It* happened the 10th of *May*, at ten o'Clock in the " Morning 33′ 28″ at *Caifong-fou*. The Sun and the Moon " were in in *Taurus* 16° 0′ 28″. The *Paſſover* that Year *there*, " ought to have been about the *firſt* of *April*; and it was at the " *Paſſover* that our Lord was crucified. An Eclipſe upon the " 10th of *May* could not then be *that* which happened at his " Paſſion.

myſelf. I think, I am not miſtaken, as to their Capacity, their Knowledge, and their Diligence; and I am apt to think, you will find all this true, when you light on Father *Greſton*'s Hiſtory; and then pleaſe to give me an Account out of it. However, let this paſs at preſent: I'll admit, P. *Gaubil* has been very exact in his *Calculations*, provided the *two Imperial Edicts* are not found to interfere; but I am ſtrongly of an Opinion, that theſe *Edicts*, and the Father's *Calculations*, will not prove to be very *conſiſtent* with each other. We have *ſure Chineſe* Hiſtory, it ſeems, for the Truth of the *one*; but without a certain *Adjuſtment* alſo of *European* and *Chineſe* Aſtronomy, give me Leave to ſay, we cannot be ſure of the *other*. And, pray, what a ſtrange, odd, intricate *Adjuſtment* have we of the *Chineſe* and *Sacred* Chronology in Mr. *W*'s *Memoirs*, which you quoted to me an Hour * or two ago? I remember alſo, you ſhew'd from Pere *Pagi* very plainly, that amongſt the Ancients there was a *Difference* in computing the *Olympiads*; ſuch *Difference* particularly appearing, and made uſe of, in *Africanus*; whence *Pagi* makes it evident, that both *Kepler* and *Petavius* were deceiv'd, in relation to *Euſebius*: And 'tis as evident, that there can be no Reliance (if there was no other Objection) upon the perfect *Agreement* Mr. *W.* || makes between

* See above, p. 52, 53.
|| Hiſtor. Memoirs, &c, p. 149.

between the *Chineſe Annals* and the old Aſtronomical Characters and Sacred Chronology, till he has better conſider'd this *different* Computation of the *Olympiads*. And yet 'tis upon this *Adjuſtment* of his, we are to ſuppoſe, that he grounds his Aſſertion, in ſaying *, That the *Chineſe* Eclipſe, we have been talking of, *was about the New Moon, and ſo could not be the Eclipſe of the Paſſion of Chriſt.* But, with Submiſſion, I think, there is no need of obſerving any Thing farther about this Matter, becauſe there ſeems to be *Evidence* enough otherwiſe from *Pere Gaubil*, to make good the Point which he profeſſedly oppoſes: And I hope, you will preſently give me your own Thoughts upon thoſe *two Edicts* of the Emperor *Quan-vou-ti*, occaſioned by the great Diſturbance this Eclipſe gave him.

*A.* Sir, I have not get given you all the Strength of *P. Gaubil*'s Argument. He mentions his Adverſary, *Pere Bouvet*, in a very honourable Manner; † and ('tis very remarkable) he allows him (which takes off the *Objection* he made juſt now) to be a Man, not only of great Learning, but skilled in the Language and Hiſtory of *China*, where he was a *Miſſionary*; and particularly owns, that he had a thorough Knowledge of the *Chineſe* and *Euro-*



*pean*

* Teſtimony of *Phlegon, &c.* p. 28.

† Pour appuyer ſon Sentiment, il (*P. Bouvet*) ſe ſert avec beaucoup d'Erudition & d'Eſprit, des grandes connoiſſances qu' il a de la Langue & de l'Hiſtoire *Chinoiſe*; & de l'Aſtronomie Chinoiſe & *Européanne*.

*pean* Aſtronomy. You may eaſily imagine, *Pere Gaubil* did not think his Point ſufficiently ſecured, till he had anſwered the *Arguments* of ſo learned an Adverſary. I am ſo unhappy as not to have *P. Bouvet* here, to ſpeak for himſelf; you muſt therefore be contented with his *Arguments*, as they are with great Brevity produced by *Pere Gaubil*; after which, you ſhall hear the *Anſwer* given; and then, if you pleaſe, you may have my Thoughts upon the *Whole*. *Pere Gaubil* then repreſents *Pere Bouvet* arguing thus; "According to the *Chineſe* Hiſtory, "we are to *diſtinguiſh*, as to two Sorts of *Eclipſes*: "The firſt is a *natural* one; and is *that* which "ſtands marked upon the *laſt Day of the laſt* "*Moon*: The ſecond is *ſupernatural*; and is "*that* which the ſecond Imperial *Edict* men-"tions under theſe Words Po-che; it is *that* "which Tsien-tan-pa ſpeaks of, as is to "be underſtood in the firſt Imperial *Edict*, "and from the *Opinion* given by Tching-"Hing. This *ſupernatural* Eclipſe, (as is vi-"ſible at the very firſt Sight) was formerly "entered in the *(Chineſe)* Books. But in "Proceſs of Time, the Hiſtory being reviſed, "and there appearing an Eclipſe of the Sun, "marked about the *fifteenth* or *ſixteenth* Day "of the Moon, the Reviſers changed this E-"clipſe, and by a Razure, they put in its Place "*that* of the 10th of *May*. Yet in ſpite of "ſuch a *Change* made, there are evident *Signs* "yet remaining, of the Eclipſe attending our "Saviour's

" Saviour's Paſſion. Firſt, In the Behavi-
" our of the Emperor. Secondly, In the Words
" of TSIEN-TAN-PA. Thirdly, In the Opini-
" on given by TCHING-HING. Fourthly, In
" the ſecond Imperial *Edict*, which ſpeaks of
" PO-CHE." This is the Foundation of *Pere Bouvet*'s Reaſoning, which I believe to be *falſe in* * *every Point*, ſays *Pere Gaubil*, and which I ſhew to be ſo, as follows.

*B.* It is very ſtrange, that *Pere Bouvet*, with all his Learning and Application; with all that Skill in *European* and *Chineſe* Aſtronomy, which *Pere Gaubil* allows him to be Maſter of, ſhould be ſo ſadly miſtaken, as not to be right in any *one Point* about this Affair. But pray inform me, how *Pere Gaubil* confutes what the other has aſſerted.

*A. Pere Gaubil* anſwers thus; "The Diſtinc-
" tion of *two Eclipſes*, in the preſent Caſe, has
" not any Foundation. It is likewiſe confeſs'd,
" by *Pere Bouvet*, that the Eclipſe upon the
" Day KOUEY-HAY, the laſt Day of the third
" Moon, was a *natural* Eclipſe. Now, ac-
" cording to the *Chineſe* Hiſtory and Aſtro-
" nomy, the two *Edicts*; TCHING-HING's
" Opinion or Memorial; and the Emperor's
" *Retirement*; were all in conſequence of, or oc-
" caſioned by this *natural* Eclipſe upon the Day
" QUEY-HAY, the *laſt* Day of the third Moon;
" and this is what ought here particularly to
" be taken notice of."



* Je crois faux dans tous ſes points.

*B.* I don't remember, that either the two *Edicts*, or TCHING-HING's Memorial, make Mention of the Day QUEY-HAY; or that they do underſtand the Eclipſe, they were concerned about, to have happened upon the *laſt* Day of the *third* Moon. I wonder his Imperial Majeſty ſhould have been in ſuch a terrible Fright upon ſo ſhort an *Anticipation* in Time; eſpecially when they had been uſed to it, it ſeems, for many Years before. If *Pere Bouvet* had all the Knowledge in *Chineſe* Affairs, that *Pere Gaubil* allows him to have, and yet ſtill is ſo much *out* in every Particular; he muſt have done by his Readers, as too many others do at this Day, *i. e.* groſsly *impoſe* upon them. I ſee no Reaſon yet to charge *this* upon *Pere Bouvet*. I beg Pardon for the Interruption, and deſire you will proceed.

*A. Pere Gaubil* continues his Anſwer thus: "I have already (in this Diſcourſe) made it "appear particularly, that a *ſupernatural* E-"clipſe could no Ways be proved from the "Words of TSIEN-TAN-PA, nor from the "firſt Imperial *Edict*, nor yet from the Memo-"rial of TCHING-HING. As to the *ſuper-"natural* Eclipſe being *razed* out of the *Books*, "it is only a Suſpicion, and a Conjecture of "*Pere Bouvet*'s. But in this Caſe there muſt "be *Facts*, and *Facts* well atteſted too. It is "certain, the *Mathematicians* and *Hiſtorians* did "then hold their Courts in Conjunction toge-

"ther.

" ther. It is moreover certain, that the Ma-
" thematicians often found Means to *ſtrike out*
" *of their Books falſe Calculations, and to place*
" *true ones in their Room.* But the *Hiſtory* of
" *Eclipſes*, where we have particularly an Ac-
" count preſerved of ſeveral of theſe * *under-*
" *hand Doings*, in relation to the Eclipſes
" ſeen during the Reign of *Quan-vou-ti*, ſays
" nothing that favours the *Conjecture* of *Pere*
" *Bouvet*, concerning the Eclipſe in the XXXIſt
" Year of *Jeſus Chriſt*. As to the Proof, which
" this *Father* grounds upon the Characters
" Po-CHE, mentioned in the ſecond Imperial
" *Edict*; it is certain that KING-FANG, as we
" ſee it in the Aſtronomy of *former Princes* †,
" did define Po-CHE thus, *viz. An Eclipſe that*
" *happens neither upon the* firſt *nor the* laſt *Day.*
" Others have explained it thus; *an Eclipſe*
" *that is out of* KIAO, *i. e. out of the Bounds*
" *of the Ecliptique.* Upon which it is to be
" *remarked*, Firſt, That this Definition of
" Po-CHE was given by ſome private Perſons
" only, who, without doubt, had ſeen *natural*
" Eclipſes; but not agreeing with their Cal-
" culations, inſtead of ſaying, *the Calculation*
" *is falſe*, they have ſaid, that *the Eclipſe is*
" *contrary to the Rules of Aſtronomy:* And
" KING-FANG thought fit, before the Time of
" *Jeſus*

* Pluſieurs de ces Intrigues.

† Dans l'Aſtronomy des HAN anterieurs. *Pere Gaubil*'s Note here, is, *The Weſtern* HAN; *they reigned at* SIGAN-FOU, *before the Time of Jeſus Chriſt.* QUAN-VOU-TI *was the firſt Prince of the Eaſtern* HAN.

" *Jesus Christ*, to give these Eclipses the Name " of Po-che. Secondly, There are ancient Au- " thors, who apply the Name of Po-che to " the Bodies both of the Sun and Moon, when " deprived of their Light. In Astronomy they " call all the Eclipses of the Sun, and of the " Moon Po-che; and it appears that Po-che, " in the strict Sense of the *Word*, Means the " very * *Height* of the Eclipse. From the *Text* " in the second *Edict*, nothing more is to be " collected, than that the Emperor so understood " the *solar* Eclipse, as an *Indication*, that he " should reform what was amiss in his Govern- " ment: And it is certain, that the *Chinese* " History says, that the Eclipse, upon the Day " Kouey-Hay of the third Moon, did occa- " sion this *second* Edict. This Eclipse was a " *natural* one; and therefore the Emperor's " *second* Edict is to be understood of a *natu-* " *ral* Eclipse." Thus I have given you *Pere Gaubil*'s Argument, with all its Force, against the Assertions of the learned *Pere Bouvet*, concerning a supernatural Eclipse in *China*, in the XXXIst Year of the *Vulgar Æra*. If you are now disposed to have my Thoughts upon the whole Matter, I am ready to give them you.

*B.* Sir, I thank you: I would first beg leave to observe two or three Things, that just occur, from some *Chinese* Authors I have been lately reading,

* Le *Fort* de l'Eclipse,

reading, having a near Relation to what you have been now reading to me from *Pere Gaubil*. I perceive, from him, as I do from ſeveral other Writers, that the *Words* in the *Chineſe* Language admit of *various* Significations; which makes it ſo difficult often to know what the *Chineſe* mean. And I do not at all wonder at this; becauſe one of their Writers aſſures me, that the *Chineſe Language* * has but about *three hundred and thirty Words* in it; and this Author has given himſelf the Trouble, in a *Table*, to let us know the *Words* themſelves; ſo that I ſhould think, *Pere Gaubil*'s arguing, as he does, from the Senſe or Meaning of *Chineſe* Words ſhould have no great Weight in the Oppoſition he makes to *Pere Bouvet*. I would farther obſerve, as to the *Razure* that *Pere Bouvet* takes notice of in the *Chineſe* Books, that it has been a Thing often practiſed by Order of the *Emperors* themſelves, nay, ſometimes it has been done with their own Hands. For in the Caſe of *Pere Intorcetta*, a Miſſionary, (who is mentioned among others by our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*,) the Emperor then reigning, thought fit to make

* Cette Langue ne contient que trois Cens trente Mots ou environ, tous d'une Syllabe, ou qu'on prononce au moins d'une maniere ſi *ſerrée*, qu'on n'en diſtingue preſque jamais qu'une. ---- Le méſme mot (avec nous) prononce avec une inflexion de voix plus forte ou plus foible a diverſes ſignifications: Ainſi la Langue *Chinoiſe*, quand on la parle exactemenr, eſt une *Eſpece de Muſique*, & renferme une veritable Harmonie qui en fait l'eſſence & le Caractere particulier. *P. Louis le Compte* Nouveaux Memoires de la *Chine*. Tom. I. p. 266, 267.

make a *Razure*, † though not of an Eclipſe, with his own Hands, in the *publick Books*: And *Pere Gaubil*, I obſerve, owns that the *Mathematicians* did often find Means to *ſtrike* out of their *Books* ſuch *Calculations* of Eclipſes, as were in *their Opinion falſe*. But what if we ſhould ſay, thoſe *Mathematicians* themſelves were *miſtaken* in their *Razures*; muſt we take *Pere Gaubil*'s Word for it, that they were not ſo?

*A.* Sir, I am pleaſed to hear your Obſervations. Let me add a few more; and then we will make an End of this *Chineſe* Affair. Can it poſſibly be conceived, that the Emperor QUANG-VOU-TI ſhould have been thrown into ſuch Convulſions; his Soul ruffled in ſo terrible a Manner; only becauſe the *Eclipſe* came on about twenty four Hours ſooner than was expected? Had not the ſame Things happened for ſeveral Years before? And was it giving *any Eaſe*, or any Sort of Advice to their *Emperor*, to tell him the ſame Story over again; which, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, he knew as well as they that told it him? Or in caſe he knew it not, it was a very *inſignificant* Story, though a true one: So that *Pere Gaubil* does not ſeem to put a right Conſtruction by any Means upon thoſe Words of TCHING-HING; *for ſome Years paſt there have been ſeveral Eclipſes obſerved upon the laſt Day of the Moon.* TCHING-HING does

* L'Empereur peu d'Années auparavant, avoit de ſa propre Main rayé pluſieurs Lignes d'un Livre, &c. Le *Comte*, uti ſupra. Tom. II. p. 270.

does not ſay, that the Eclipſe, which the Emperor was *then* conſulting him about, did happen upon the *laſt Day of the Moon*: What is ſaid, is (no doubt) to induce the Emperor to lay all the Blame upon the Moon's irregular Motions; that as it was a Thing notoriouſly known, for ſome Years paſt, that there had been an *Anticipation* (in *Time*) of *one Day*; ſo, by *Parity* of Argument, his Imperial Majeſty was to conclude, that the Moon happening that Year (the XXXIſt of the Vulgar *Æra*) to have been upon a much *fuller March* than formerly, there might be a reaſonable Allowance made for an *Anticipation* of *ſeveral* Days, as well as *one*, in the preſent Eclipſe, in Proportion to ſuch *Celerity* of the Moon's Movement. And thus, as I take it, TCHING-HING comforts his Sovereign, as if he had ſaid more explicitely; *The Reaſon is this, the ſtrange Eclipſe that has now happened, is owing to a much ſwifter Motion of the Moon, than has been for ſeveral Years paſt.* Cela vient *(dit* CHIN-HING) de ce que la Lune a *accelerè* ſon Mouvement, & par là le Tems de *(cette)* Eclipſe eſt *anticipé*. If we underſtand TCHING-HING arguing in this Manner with his Prince, it is all eaſy and natural, and a pretty Amuſement offered to cure the diſordered Mind of his Prince; but otherwiſe, the Argument, in my Opinion, is inſipid and Lifeleſs, and no Ways agreeable with the known Spirit and Genius of the *Chineſe*.

*B.* Your talking ſo merrily upon the Moon's *full March*, puts me in mind of thoſe *Irregularities* that our *modern* Aſtronomers lay to her charge: For, I think, 'tis univerſally agreed on, that the Moon does not always revolve *exactly* in the Ecliptick, but runs ſometimes *five* or *ſix* Degrees above *it* to the North, and ſometimes below *it* to the Southward: Nor does ſhe always keep the ſame Diſtance from the Earth; as appears by her Diameter, which, when meaſur'd, is found ſometimes conſiderably larger than at others. Theſe *Irregularities*, no doubt, gave the *Chineſe* Diſturbance in their *Calculations*, and were a good Handle for coming off with Honour, when the Emperors charg'd their *Aſtronomers* with Miſtakes of this kind.

*A.* Mr. *W.* (you know,) * ſays, "That the "Calculation of this Eclipſe had probably "been *careleſsly* made by the Aſtronomers; "and that they were loth to confeſs it, leſt "they ſhould have been *capitally* puniſh'd." You ſee quite the *Reverſe* in the Conduct and Behaviour of the Emperor *Quang-vou-ti*, upon this Occaſion. His Concern was inexpreſſible; but there was no Anger, no knitting of his Brows, no Threats of any ſort: He gave himſelf up to Meditation, and took Advice of his Nobles. I make no queſtion, but the *Sight* of the *Moon* at that Time affected him very much; *La Vûë du Sol & de la Lune nous avertit (dit l'Em-*

* Ibid. *p.* 28.

*l'Empereur) de penſer à nous.* Why may we not ſuppoſe QUANG-VOU-TI to be then looking and wondering, from his Palace of *Loyang*, in the *ſame Manner* as the *Areopagite* was at *Heliopolis* in *Egypt*? I am more confirm'd than ever, from the *Words* of this *Edict*, that the Caſe was really ſo: And *P. Gaublin*, I muſt think, has ſaid a good many Things, that when they come to be ſifted, and more narrowly enquir'd into, make much more *againſt*, than *for* his Side of the Queſtion: For inſtance, his quoting thoſe Definitions of PO-CHE, viz. *An Eclipſe that happens neither upon the* firſt *nor the* laſt *Day of the Moon*; or *an Eclipſe that is out of* KIAO, *or out of the Bounds of the Ecliptick*; really hurts his Cauſe, though at firſt ſight it *ſeemingly* favours it: For he ſays, the Uſe of the Word *Po-che*, in *theſe Senſes*, was long before the Time of our Saviour. What then? Was it not a proper *Word* to be made uſe of, when the *wonderful* Eclipſe was ſeen, upon *Xerxes*'s tranſporting his Army over the *Helleſpont*, near five hundred Years before Chriſt? And did it not continue as proper a *Word* to be uſed when our Saviour ſuffer'd, and another *wonderful* Eclipſe happen'd? More might be offer'd in favour of Pere *Bouvet*'s Aſſertions: But, I think, enough has been ſaid; and ſo let the *Chineſe* Affair reſt at preſent.

*B.* You juſt now mention'd the wonderful Eclipſe that *Xerxes* ſaw. Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*

(you know) has ſome *Criticiſms* upon it, (*pag.* 68, 69.) Pray how ſtands that Paſſage in *Herodotus*?

*A.* Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* does *criticize* indeed; but he makes ſad Work o't, ſurely. The Paſſage in *Engliſh* reads to this Purpoſe *; "*Xerxes*'s Army being upon a full March towards *Abydus*, "the Sun diſappear'd, *failing to run its wonted* "*Courſe*; no Clouds, but a very clear Sky: Inſtead "of Day, it became Night. *Xerxes*, conſidering "the Matter, was very ſollicitous to know the "Meaning of it. Upon which he apply'd himſelf to the *Magi*, that they might inform "him what this φάσμα, or *Failure* in the Sun, "portended. Their Anſwer was, that God, by "this *Failure* in the Sun, ſignify'd to the *Gre*"*cians*, that there ſhould be a *Failure*, or a "*Defection* amongſt their Cities: For the *Sun*, "they ſaid, was the *Greeks* Protector; but, "that the *Moon* was *theirs*. *Xerxes* hearing "this, and growing very cheerful upon "it, purſued his March." Now, what Occaſion was there for our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*'s making his *Difference*? viz. Whether *Herodotus*'s ſaying, that the *Sun fail'd running its Courſe*, or (more ſtrictly render'd) *the Sun quitting its Place in Heaven*, ] ὁ ἥλιος ἐκλιπὼν τὴν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἕδρην, ] be the *ſame* as calling it an *Eclipſe*? The whole Tenour of the Paragraph makes it plain, that this was a *Poetical* Expreſſion

* *Herod. Hiſt. Lib. VII.*

preſſion of *Herodotus*, and cannot admit of any other Interpretation: The *Defection* or Revolting amongſt the Greeks, and the *Defection* of the *Sun*, in leaving its Place, is expreſs'd by the *ſame Word* in the Original; and had there been the leaſt Room for a *Criticiſm*, ſo accurate a Perſon as Dr. *Gale* would not have omitted it: But *he* has made none at all.

*B.* Pray, Sir, what has been the Opinion of our Aſtronomers and Chronologers about this extraordinary Eclipſe?

*A.* I think, when you hear *Calviſius* ſpeak, (to whom Dr. *Gale* refers his Reader,) you hear enough. His Judgment then take as follows *;

" 'Tis affirm'd by all Chronologers, that when *Xer-*
" *xes* was marching at the Beginning of the *Spring*,
" there was an Eclipſe of the Sun: But *Herodo-*
" *tus*, from whom they have their Knowledge of
" it, does not there define any *Natural* Eclipſe;
" nor do our Aſtronomical Tables furniſh us with
" *any Eclipſe in theſe Months*. *Herodotus* ſays, the
" Sun *diſappear'd*, and yet there was a *clear*
" *Sky*; that he *left his Seat*, or appear'd no
" where. But now, in every Eclipſe the Sun
" is darken'd by *Degrees*, and the Place, where
" it is, appears; therefore *here* there was not
" *properly* an Eclipſe, but there was ſome ſort of
" *Phænomenon*, or φάσμα, (as *Herodotus* calls it,)
" whence the Sun diſappear'd all on a ſudden,

" Nor

* *Calviſ.* opus Chronol. ad An. Mundi 3470 & 3472. Ante C. N. 478, 476.

" Nor was *Herodotus* ſo little vers'd in Aſtro-
" nomy, as not to be able to deſcribe a Solar
" Eclipſe; for he writes, how that *this* very
" Year, in Autumn, there was an Eclipſe of
" the Sun, when *Cleombrutus*, the *Spartan* King,
" ſacrificed at *Iſthmus*. So likewiſe he deſcribes
" another Eclipſe, as we have it above, when
" the *Lydians* were at War with *Cyaxares*.
" Beſides, *Aſtronomers* know very well, that
" *two* great Solar Eclipſes cannot poſſibly hap-
" pen in the *ſame* Climate, in one and the *ſame*
" Year; ſo that ſeeing *that* Eclipſe, which
" happen'd in *Autumn*, may be rightly demon-
" ſtrated, or accounted for, it follows, that in
" the *Spring* there could be no Eclipſe in the
" *ſame* Parts of the Earth. *Buntinck*, accord-
" ing to his uſual Practice, charges *Herodotus*
" *here*, as guilty of *two Miſtakes*: The one is,
" in aſſerting an Eclipſe to have been *this* Year
" in the *Spring*; when yet *Buntinck* has not
" been able to make out an Eclipſe himſelf all
" *this whole* Year: The other is, in *Herodotus*'s
" aſſerting that the Sun was *totally* darken'd;
" whereas, ſays *Buntinck*, the Sun was eclips'd
" no more than *two Digits*, and happen'd in
" the *foregoing* Year beſides. But he's in a very
" groſs Miſtake himſelf; for there was both a
" very great Eclipſe this Year, (as we ſhall ſhew
" below,) and alſo *that* which happen'd the
" preceeding Year, was a very inconſiderable
" one; was neither viſible, nor could any Ob-

" ſervation

" ſervation have been made, had the Sky been
" never ſo clear; and beſides, 'tis an Eclipſe
" that *Herodotus* has taken no Notice of. *Co-*
" *domannus*, a Chronologer, *confounds* this E-
" clipſe of *Herodotus* with another, that hap-
" pen'd about two Years after, *A. M.* 3472.
" But *Herodotus* being then living himſelf, and
" having ſo well diſtinguiſh'd the *Time* of *Xer-*
" *xes*'s paſſing over the *Helleſpont*, there can be
" no room to doubt of *Codomannus*'s being in
" an Error." Thus I have given you as conciſe an Account, as I well could, of what *Calviſius* has ſaid upon this *Extraordinary* Eclipſe; an Eclipſe, by which God was pleas'd to make a mighty Prince reflect upon the Weakneſs of a numerous Army; and thought it proper to puzzle the wiſeſt among the Heathen in their *natural* Calculations; and this, about *Four hundred and ſeventy Years* before they were puzzled again with an Eclipſe of a much more extraordinary Nature.

*B.* Sir, it now grows late: I thank you heartily for the agreeable Entertainment I have had this Day. I have ſeen with Pleaſure the polite, the knowing, the learned *Phlegon* reſcued out of very *inſincere* Hands; after a ſevere *Ordeal*, ſhining out with greater Luſtre; and by that Means becoming a *ſtronger Evidence* in behalf of Chriſtianity. I was wondering, if you remember, this Morning, (ſoon after we met,) how you and the *Anti-Phlegoniſt* could, both of you,

you, be *doing real Service* in this Matter, *to the Cauſe of Chriſt.* I am now thoroughly convinc'd where the *Truth* lies; and, after that, more need not be ſaid, to ſhew who have beſt contributed to the *Cauſe of Chriſtianity.* Let him have the Thanks of *Deiſts* and *Free-Thinkers*, if he pleaſes; and I'll venture to make him this Compliment my ſelf, "That he has done "more to ſerve thoſe Gentlemen, than moſt of "them are able to do themſelves." There is one Thing, however, that falls out very *unluckily* for theſe Perſons, when they are extolling this *Diſſertation* of our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*: For whilſt they are commending *that* and its Author, they are at the ſame time making a very ſcurvy Reflection upon the *Judgment* and *Memory* of Dr. *Samuel Clarke.* I cannot believe, that any *impartial* Perſon will now be of an Opinion, (ſince our *Anti-Phlegoniſt's Reaſons* are known,) that Dr. *Clarke's Underſtanding* could ever receive any *Biaſs*, or that he could *thence* be inclin'd to *ſtrike* ſuch a noble *Teſtimony*, as that of *Phlegon*, out of his *Boyle's Lectures.* But if the *Underſtanding* was not to be biaſs'd, is it not too plain, that the *Will* muſt have been tamper'd with in this Caſe?

*A.* Your Queſtion implies a very home *Affirmative.* I would not indulge ſuch Reflections, did not the ſame Argument (that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* makes uſe of) oblige me to the doing of it. 'Tis the *Cauſe* of our great Lord and

and Maſter *Jeſus Chriſt*. Chriſtianity requires this at your Hands, and mine, To do all the *real Service* we can to *it*, by detecting ſuch *Antichriſtian Sophiſtry* as now prevails too much in the World. The *enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom* are alſo more eſpecially to be guarded againſt at this Time; but when *Inſincerity* has been once plainly prov'd, I ſhould think leſs Danger is to be fear'd from *ſuch as lie in wait to deceive*. I have long ago (as I told you this Morning) charg'd Dr. *Clarke* with the moſt flagrant *Inſincerity* in Matters of the greateſt Importance; and I'll take Care (God willing) at our next meeting, which I hope will be very ſoon, to make good my Promiſe, in giving you farther Proof (not hitherto taken notice of by any Writer, that I know of,) of ſuch ſort of Dealing in the very *fundamental* Points of Chriſtianity. You are not then to wonder, if I come pretty eaſily into your Way of Thinking, upon the Cloſe of the Day. I hope you go away ſatisfied, that thoſe ancient *Fathers*, *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, have been baſely uſed by this *Anti-Phlegoniſt*; and that what I have ſaid, has been ſufficient to wipe off the *Aſperſions* that have been caſt on them. There is one Expreſſion or two, indeed, of our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, relating to thoſe *Fathers*, that ſticks very cloſe with me; and ſince it carries a very ugly *Innuendo* along with it, I ſhould think him oblig'd to *explain* himſelf,

and to tell the World plainly, whether thoſe *Fathers* did not (in his Opinion) ſhew their *Weakneſs*, or were not in their *Dotage*, when they took upon 'em to expound ſome *Fundamental* Point or other in Chriſtianity? I am pretty ſure, his *Maſters*, that he has been ſerving, do apply the *Expreſſions* that way; and many honeſt well-meaning People may probably ſtumble at it, and be apt to think that this *Deſign* or *Weakneſs*, charg'd upon *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, may be extended much farther than to this Affair of *Phlegon*.

*B.* If our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſhould be minded to *explain* himſelf, I am apt to think *Tan. Faber*, that you mention'd ſome Time ago, when you quoted Biſhop *Pearſon*, may be a likely Perſon to help him out in this Matter. Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſeems to have been pretty much beholden to him already. But pray, Sir, before we part, let me hear you read again theſe remarkable *Expreſſions*, which I find you have taken ſo much Umbrage at.

*A.* I believe he may likewiſe have been beholden to one *Dan. Zuicker* a *Pruſſian*, of whom more by-and-by. Our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* thus expreſſes himſelf*: "That the Things for "which *Juſtin Martyr appeals to* the Acts of "*Pilate*, were ever ſent to *Tiberius* †, has no "Foun-

* Page 37, 39, 40.

† The Vanity and Falſity of this *Aſſertion* has been ſufficiently ſhewn above, *p.* 90 —108.

" Foundation of *Probability*. Could *Pilate* " poſſibly ſay ſome of the Things which *Ter-* " *tullian* PUTS upon him? —— It ſeems there- " fore much the moſt natural, to ſuppoſe that " *theſe* ACTS of *Pilate* came out of the ſame " Mint, which ſome other early *Forgeries* did; " and were *miſtaken* by theſe good Men, (*Ju-* " *ſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*,) and quoted as " *genuine*; juſt as they did *ſome other Things*, " which ſeem'd to make ſo ſtrongly for *their* " *Cauſe*." I ever thought *their Cauſe* had been *ours*, (as I obſerv'd in the Morning;) but our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has thought proper to diſtinguiſh. What thoſe *ſome other Things* are, which thoſe *Fathers* quoted by Miſtake or Deſign as *genuine*, to SERVE their Cauſe, is not yet explain'd; but there is Room to conjecture, that *they* were communicated to Dr. *Clarke*; for our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, in the very Beginning of his Introduction, has the very *ſame* Words as here: He ſays, " *Amongſt ſome other Things*, which on " that Occaſion I *ſuggeſted* to him, [Dr. *Clarke*] " I told him my Apprehenſion, that the *E-* " *cliplſe*, &c." Now, ſuppoſe the Expreſſions, concerning the bleſſed *Trinity*, that we meet with in *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, were in the Number of thoſe *ſome other Things*, that were ſuggeſted to Dr. *Clarke*, ('tis certain you and I may *ſuggeſt*, as well as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*,) what Method would you take to convince an *Anti-Trinitarian* from the Works of thoſe two

*Fathers?* No doubt, you would quote ſuch *Expreſſions*, (and certainly there are very *ſtrong* ones,) as were moſt pertinent to confirm the Doctrine: But would not your *Authority* quoted be immediately diſputed, upon the foot that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has now put *it?* Would not you be told, that *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian* were *miſtaken good Men*, and conſequently, that their Judgment was not to be depended on, becauſe they had quoted *ſome Things* themſelves without good *Authority*, that *ſeem to make ſtrongly for their Cauſe?* Has our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* left you any Room thence to diſtinguiſh in Favour of Chriſtianity, beſides the ſneering Appellation of *Good Men?* I need not enlarge upon this Topick. You ſee the natural Tendency of this ſort of Argument, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has put into the Mouths of our Adverſaries. However, I hope what I have ſaid, has ſet thoſe *Fathers* in a true Light, by removing the particular *Obiections* that have been made; and if ſo, then the *Argument* form'd from *them* will be of no Force.

*B.* Sir, I perceive theſe two *Fathers* (*Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*) are remarkable, as well for their *Antiquity*, as for their *Expreſſions* about the *Trinity*. I own, 'tis very likely ſuch *Objections* may be made, as you talk of; and 'tis eaſy to imagine, that thoſe, who do not approve of ſome *Doctrines* contain'd in their Works, will do all they can to bring thoſe *Authors* into *Diſrepute.*

*pute.* But pray, how do theſe Writers expreſs themſelves in relation to the *Divinity* of Chriſt? For they being, as we call 'em, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, I am the more deſirous to be inform'd about it.

*A. Juſtin Martyr*, amongſt other Arguments uſed for proving the *Divinity* of our Bleſſed Saviour, produces *one* from the *Worſhip and Adoration* due to him, from ſeveral Texts of *Holy Scripture*: And our *Anti-Trinitarians* know very well, that their *Cauſe* can never be good, ſo long as *Juſtin Martyr*'s Expoſition and Argument ſhall find *Credit* amongſt us. The Judicious and Learned Biſhop *Bull* has ſet this Matter * in a fine Light; and Time will not allow me to obſerve ſo much from him as I otherwiſe would: Your own good Judgment will direct you to make the ſame Concluſion as *Juſtin Martyr* does, *viz.* where the *Worſhip and Adoration* paid is truly *Divine*, there God *only* can be the Object; and no *Creature*, (how excellent ſoever,) can be render'd capable of receiving *it*. That Chriſt then can be *really* God †, and yet not be ſo *by Nature*, muſt be one of thoſe *incom-*

* Primitiva & Apoſtolica Traditio de Jeſu Chriſti *Divinitate*, Cap. 6. "Quis credat (inquit *Bullus*) *egregium Fidei Chriſtianæ* "*Doctorem*, [*Juſt. Mart.*] Elementarem, quæ eſt de Uno Deo, "Evangelii Doctrinam (vel Idiotæ cuivis Inter Catechumenos "probe notam) non fuiſſe pleniſſime edoctum; aut fortiſſimum "Chriſti contra *Paganicas* Superſtitiones Impietateſq; Athletam "ac Martyrem, adeo turpiter in ipſius *Paganiſmi* luto adhuc hæ-"ſiſſe? Ib. contra *Zuickerum*.

† Si homo tantummodo Chriſtus, *quomodo adeſt* ubiq; invocatus? Cùm hæc Hominis natura non ſit ſed *Dei*, ut *adeſſe omni Loco* poſſit, &c. *Novat.* Lib. de Trin. Cap. 14.

*incomprehenſible* Doctrines that our *Anti-Trinitarians* can eaſily ſwallow, rather than believe as *Juſtin Martyr* has taught 'em from the *Holy Scriptures*. I deſire you will not fail conſulting Biſhop *Bull* * at your Leiſure: I am apt to think, you will from thence be able to make a pretty good Conjecture, what thoſe *ſome other Things* are, which were the Subject of this Converſation between our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* and Dr. *Clarke*. You'll find 'em to be *Romantick Notions*, vamp'd up many Years ago by one *Dan. Zuicker*, a *Pruſſian*, and tranſmitted hither for the Edification of our *Free-Thinkers*. The Author would have the World believe, that the Diſciples of *Simon Magus* ſadly impos'd upon *Juſtin*; and that this *Martyr* was the moſt early Writer that began to talk, in the *Simonian* Stile, concerning a *New Generation of Chriſt*, &c. No Wonder then, (ſome may ſay,) that *Juſtin Martyr* ſhould be ſo warmly attack'd, and ſuch *Innuendo's* thrown out, as might leſſen his Reputation. Our *Unitarians* at Home ſoon built upon this *wild Scheme* of *D. Zuicker*, ſaying, That *Juſtin Martyr* had made a *Change* in the Doctrine of Chriſt; thus taking Exceptions to what Biſhop *Bull* had ſaid upon the Matter; and one of them charging *Juſtin Martyr* directly, as the *firſt* Perſon that advanc'd *the Coexiſtence of the Son with the Father before the Creation of the World*. I cannot help thinking, till I am better inform'd, that theſe

* Prim. & Apoſt. Trad. de Chriſti Divinitate.

theſe *Whimſies* of *D. Zuicker*, improv'd by ſome of our own Countrymen, in relation to *Juſtin Martyr*, though they have been ſo thoroughly confuted by this Biſhop, are what our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſeems deſirous ſhould be brought upon the *Tapis* again. Is it a proper Time, or no, my Friend?

*B.* If we may make any Gueſs from the *Liberty* taken by this Writer, in *defaming* theſe ancient *Fathers* of the Church, it ſhould ſeem, that he knows his *Strength* as to Numbers. My own Converſation, ſome Time ago, led me deep into this Affair; and I cannot but think, (all Things conſidered,) our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has hit it off pretty well, in Point of *Time*. —— But pray, after *Juſtin Martyr*, what has *Tertullian* done, to make our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſpeak ſuch hard Things of him? He charges him with ſomething more than *Weakneſs*: He ſays, this *Father* has PUT upon the World, in Things of a religious Nature. I am thoroughly ſatisfied, from the Remarks you have made, that *Tertullian* has, by no Means, PUT upon us in the Particular as this Writer charges. Why then ſo much *Spleen* and Invective againſt this *Father*?

*A. Tertullian*, it is certain, had his Failings, and ſome very great ones: But it is to be obſerved, that, even whilſt he was fallen into *Montaniſm*, his Notions about the *Trinity* continued the *ſame*: " And do but read his ſingle

" Book

" Book againſt *Praxeas* (ſays Biſhop *Bull* *) " and you will find him aſſerting the *Con-* " *ſubſtantiality* of the Son (i. e. *the Sameneſs* " *of Subſtance or Eſſence with the Father*) ſo " fully, and with ſuch Plainneſs and Openneſs, " that one would think he wrote *after* (and not " before) the Council of *Nice*." I muſt refer you to the ſame learned Author for *Particulars*, conſidering you have already moved for going Home. Let me obſerve to you, that there is but little Difference, in Point of Time, between *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*; and that of all the Writers of the *Latin* Church, now extant, *Tertullian* is the *oldeſt*. The *Apology*, (which our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has been ſo free in cenſuring,) is generally obſerved by moſt Writers, to be the Flower of all his Writings. There is, in *that*, eſtabliſhed the Doctrine of *Three Perſon and one God*, ſo long as *Tertullian*'s Authority ſhall have its Weight amongſt us. But it is certain, no Piece of *Tertullian*'s does more gall our *Anti-Trinitarians*, than that ſingle Book of his againſt *Praxeas*, juſt now mention'd: For in this Book it is, *that ancient Father* manifeſtly refers to thoſe remarkable Words of St. *John* (1 *Ep.* v. 7.) *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit*; and THESE THREE ARE

* Def. Fid. Nic. Cap. 7. Unum ejus Librum adverſus *Praxeam* legas, in qno de SS. Trinitate fuſe & ex profeſſo agit; toties ibi ac tam aperte Filii aſſerit *Conſubſtantialitatem*, ut Auctorem crederes *poſt Nicæni Concilii tempora ſcripſiſſe*.

ARE ONE. Our *Anti-Trinitarians* leave no Stone unturned to evade the Force of this Paſſage in *Tertullian*. It is a *Paſſage*, that ſhall be thoroughly diſcuſſed (if you pleaſe) at our next Meeting, when *Lucian*'s *Philopatris*, with Dr. *Cave*'s Manuſcript *Comment*, &c. when the ancient Manuſcript of *Caſſiodorus*, and Dr. *Samuel Clarke*'s Notions about that *Paſſage*, in his Letters to Mr. *Nelſon*, Dr. *Wells*, &c. come to be conſidered: And then further *Evidence* ſhall be deduced in behalf of *Chriſtianity*. This Paſſage in *Tertullian* undeniably confutes the *Objection* that the *Anti-Trinitarians* have ſometimes made to the Genuineſs of that *Text*, (1 *John* v. 7.) as if *it* had been clandeſtinely put into St. *John*'s *Epiſtle*, after the *Nicene Council*; whereas it is plain, *Tertullian* flouriſhed a *Hundred and thirty Years* before that *Council* was held; and in which the *Arian* Hereſy was condemned by above *three hundred* Biſhops. Our *Anti-Trinitarians* do not ſo much as attempt to prove the *Spuriouſneſs* of this Book of *Tertullian*'s, or the particular *Paſſage* in it: But (ſays * Dr. *Clarke*) thoſe Words in *Tertullian*, THESE THREE ARE ONE, *are plainly the Words of that Author himſelf, and not a Citation of the Text*, (1 *John* v. 7.) I think, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* might as well have adviſed *him*, to have ſtruck out this *Explication* of *Tertullian*'s Paſſage, as the *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon*: For though

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* Dr. *Clarke*'s Reply to Mr. *Nelſon*, p. 210.

the Doctor ſays, *they are* PLAINLY *the Words*, *&c.* yet he does not give ſo much as the Shadow of a *Reaſon* for his ſaying *ſo:* Whereas he *knew*, that Dr. *Hammond*, Biſhop *Bull*, Dr. *Mills*, and ſeveral more learned Men, had not only given their Opinion quite contrary to his own, but had alſo alledged their *Reaſons* for ſaying, that theſe Words, THESE THREE ARE ONE in that Paſſage, were not *Tertullian*'s, but *Scripture Words*, there referred to by him. Since Dr. *Clarke* then, was not able to aſſign any *Reaſon*, it is certain, he might as well have taken the *ſame ſhort Method* in explaining, as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has done in cenſuring *Tertullian*, *viz.* that he was one of thoſe *weak*, miſtaken *good* Men, that had a fruitful Invention for ſerving his *own Cauſe*; that thoſe Words, THESE THREE ARE ONE, luckily coming into his Head, when he was arguing againſt *Praxeas*, were, after the Council of *Nice*, catched hold of by the Orthodox Party, and ſo inſerted into St. *John*'s Epiſtle.

*B.* There ſeems to be a ſtrange Sort of *Liberty* taken, now a Days, in reflecting upon thoſe ancient *Fathers* of the Chriſtian Church. I remember I was a Witneſs to a great deal of *it*, three or four Years ago: And in our *firſt Conference*, you took * Notice, "That I was "very much *prejudiced* againſt thoſe *primitive* "*Gentlemen*;

* Part I. p. 15.

" *Gentlemen*; and withal, you then promiſed " me, that, if I deſired it, you would vindi- " cate *them* from thoſe vile Reproaches and " unjuſt Reflections that are caſt upon them in " a late *Free-Thinking* Book, called *Chriſti-* " *anity as Old as the Creation.*" I can now eaſily excuſe you that Trouble: For your Vindication already appeared ſufficient in our ſubſequent Debates; and particularly ſo in this Day's Converſation. I began to think as much (you know) at our *ſecond* Meeting, † *viz.* that *Heathen* Writers and the *Fathers* do ſupport one another in *Facts* relating to the Truth of the *Chriſtian Religion.* But, before we part with *Tertullian*, I deſire to be better informed about his *Montaniſm*; for I perceive *that* was the great *Failure* in his Life, which you have already hinted at. I hope the *Failure* admits of ſome Alleviations.

*A.* Sir, I perceive, you are a Stranger to Mr. *Reeve's Engliſh* Tranſlation of the *Apologies* of theſe ancient *Fathers.* You will there find a very ſatisfactory Account, as to this Matter, in his *Preliminary* Diſcourſe to *Tertullian's Apologetick*; and, if you would read over likewiſe Mr. *Reeve's* Epiſtolary Diſcourſe to Mr. *Nelſon*, upon ſome *ſeaſonable* Subjects, you would highly oblige me, and give your ſelf a real Pleaſure at the ſame Time. I can only now juſt tell you, that in *Tertullian*

 " there

† *Ibid.* p. 51.

" there is a complicated Inſtance of *Learning*
" and *Frailty*; in which we may read the
" Neceſſity of our Dependance upon the Grace
" of God; the Danger of climbing after ex-
" traordinary Heights and *Auſterities*, with-
" out a humble Spirit; of leaving the Com-
" munion of the Church, to go to Heaven
" by ourſelves; and of wandering after new
" Lights, and new Prophets, when we have
" the Word of God to be *a Lanthorn to our*
" *Feet, and a Light unto our Paths.*" *Tertullian* (ſays Mr. *Reeves*) being of a Temper much like his Style, extremely hard and ſevere; and and hearing of *Montanus*, that he was no Holder-forth of *ſtrange Doctrines*, but only of ſtrange *Strictneſs and Severity in Diſcipline*; a a Man of Mortification, and of a moſt ſanctified Spirit; that he out-faſted and out-prayed the carnal Catholicks by many Degrees; that he was a powerful Teacher, and gifted with the *Paraclete*, with the Spirit of Prophecy, with amazing Viſions and Extaſies, *&c.* Such a Character hit *Tertullian*'s Temper to a Hair. The *honeſt*, but moroſe Man, was impoſed upon; and ſo ſeparated from the Church, and cloſed with a Diſcipline after his own Heart. Now, great Allowances may be made *Tertullian*, for being carried off by ſo ſtrong a Deluſion; and in his Book againſt *Praxeas* aforeſaid, he ſays, *That he always believed in one only God, and three Perſons; and that he ſtill believes it more firmly*,

*firmly, ſince he has been inſtructed by the Paraclete or Comforter, &c.* He thought, that the *Paraclete* operated by the Miniſtry of *Montanus:* But *Tertullian*, and the firſt *Montaniſts* never believed, that *Montanus* himſelf was the *Paraclete.* So that, after this grand Failure in *Tertullian*, you will find no other Marks of *Weakneſs*, or of the *miſtaken good Man*, as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* deſcribes him.

*B.* Are we then to ſuppoſe, that our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, when he ſays, * that *Tertullian* quoted *ſome other Things as genuine*, (beſides the Acts of *Pilate*,) which were not ſo, and *which ſeemed to make ſo ſtrongly for his own Cauſe*; would have theſe Words *only* to be underſtood in relation to theſe *Errors* of *Montaniſm?* Pray, how is it?

*A.* You and I may *ſuppoſe* what we pleaſe; but you ſee our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has not thought proper to *explain* himſelf. However, admit that *his Words* are to be *ſo* underſtood; what then? You obſerve, that the Doctrine of the *Trinity* was one Part of his *own Cauſe*; which, amongſt all his Errors of *Montaniſm*, he ſtill pleaded for; and I'll venture to ſay, he never *quoted* any Thing, but what was *genuine* in defence of it. He may be reckon'd a crabbed, obſcure Writer, if you pleaſe; but he is not to be rank'd amongſt your *miſtaken Good Men, quoting ſome Things as genuine, that are not ſo*; till our

* Page 40.

*Anti-*

*Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſhall explain himſelf, and prove it to be ſo. *Montaniſm*, you ſee, will not clear up the Difficulty; and ſhould you talk in that Manner to an *Anti-Trinitarian*, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt's Reflection* would ſtill give the *Heretick* an Advantage againſt you. Read *Balzac*'s Letter to *Rigaltius*, upon his publiſhing *Tertullian*; you will find, this ancient *Father* is not there ſuſpected either of *Weakneſs* or *Deſign*; and, with all his *Obſcurity*, is had in the higheſt Veneration. "I have had a Value (ſays he) a "long Time for this Author [*Tertullian*;] and "as harſh and crabbed as he is, yet he is not "at all unpleaſant to me. I have found in "his Writings that *black Light* mention'd in "one of the ancient Poets; and I look upon "his *Obſcurity* with the ſame Pleaſure as upon "*Ebony*, which is very bright, and curiouſly "wrought. This has always been my Opi-"nion: For as the Beauties of *Africk* are not "leſs amiable, tho' they are not like ours; "and as *Sophonisba* has eclips'd ſeveral *Italian* "Ladies; ſo the Wits of that Country are not "leſs pleaſing, with this Outlandiſh ſort of "Eloquence. I ſhall prefer *him* before a great "many affected Imitators of *Cicero*; and though "we ſhould grant to the niceſt Criticks, that "his Stile is of Iron, yet they muſt likewiſe "own, that out of this Iron he has forg'd "*moſt excellent Weapons for the Defence of Chri-*"*ſtianity.*"

B. Sir,

*B.* Sir, I will make no more *Queries* about our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*: I think there is juſt Reaſon to wonder at his Confidence, in *mal-treating* theſe *Primitive Fathers* in the Manner he has done. I remember you quoted *Daillé* about an Hour or two ago; which is an Author our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſeems to be well acquainted with. This I know; he's an Author our *Free-Thinking* Society often read, to help 'em out in railing more plentifully againſt the *Fathers*: But you have convinc'd me, that the *Invectives* uſed by thoſe Gentlemen are without Foundation; eſpecially when we talk of *Facts*: And I am ſtrongly of an Opinion, that, at our next Meeting, you will give me a farther Proof, that theſe *Ante-Nicene Fathers* were the faithful Guardians of the *Goſpel* depoſited in their ſeveral Churches; and that their Writings will ſpeak them to be as *great* by Nature and Education, as any the moſt exalted *Reaſoners* of the preſent Age.

*A.* Sir, I am much pleas'd to ſee you expreſſing your ſelf in this Manner. The Arguments I have all-along offer'd you in Defence of Chriſtianity are undeniable Matters of *Fact*; and they will ſubſiſt as *ſuch*, when you and I are *gone hence, and ſhall be no more ſeen.* This is not *Prieſtcraft*, my good Friend, whatever your *quondam* Fraternity may again ſuggeſt to you, when you next meet with any of 'em: And as to the ill Uſe they make of *Daillé*, let 'em but

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own what *Daillé* himſelf has ſaid, and you may eaſily forgive 'em all the reſt. Mr. *Reeves* begins his excellent Preface, (concerning the right Uſe of the *Fathers*,) with this very Acknowledgment made by *Daillé*, viz. *That thoſe Times which came neareſt to the Apoſtles, were neceſſarily the pureſt, and leſs ſubject to Suſpicion of Corruptions, either in Doctrine, Manners, or Chriſtian Diſcipline; it being reaſonable to believe, that if there be any Corruptions crept into the Church, they crept in by Degrees, by little and little, as it happens in all other Things.* But ſuch *Talk* as this in *Daillé*, is what your *quondam* refined Gentry no more mind, than they do Mr. *Lock*, when he is reaſoning in the ſtrongeſt Manner for *Divine Revelation*. They treat Mr. *Lock*, juſt as our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* treats *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*: —— One of the *miſtaken good Men*, that out-live their *Judgment* and good Senſe, and then dream of nothing but *Life and Immortality coming to Light by the Goſpel*. Mr. *Lock* was of an Opinion, that the moſt rational Method for underſtanding the *Holy Scriptures*, was to conſult the general Senſe of thoſe Writers that lived in the pureſt Ages of the Church, or (as *Daillé* juſt now expreſſed it) in thoſe Times which came *neareſt* to the Apoſtles. But we have *Reaſoners* now in abundance, that will pay no Regard to the Judgment of thoſe ancient Writers: They are for ſetting the Sun (ſays the ſame ingenious Writer,

Writer, already * quoted) by their own *Dials*; for making *pure Reaſon*, excluſive of the *primitive Fathers*, the beſt Interpreter or Judge of Scripture. The Language, Idioms, Rites, Cuſtoms, and Diſcipline of the *Apoſtolick* Age, are Things (no Man queſtions) very neceſſary for underſtanding the obſcurer Paſſages of the Goſpel: But the *primitive Fathers* were, in a Manner, born to theſe Advantages. Beſides, our preſent Controverſies are moſtly concerning *Facts*, whether ſuch and ſuch *Doctrines* were taught, *&c.* What can *pure Reaſon* do here, without the Teſtimony of the *Fathers*, concerning Matters of *Fact* at ſuch a Diſtance? Should our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* then proceed in leſſening the Authority of *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, the ſtubborn *Facts* they have related will always have their Weight. I find, for Inſtance, *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian* (ſays Mr. *Reeve* †) with all the reſt of the Holy *Fathers*, about their *Time*, poſitively *aſſerting* the Son of God, the Man *Chriſt Jeſus*, *to be truly and properly* God, and explaining his *eternal Generation*, without any Dimunition of the *Father*, by a *Ray* from the Sun, or the Kindling of one Light from another. Now, perhaps, though I may not think their *Reaſoning* or *Similitude* hold exactly true in every Point, yet, I am ſure, as to the *Fact*, *viz.* that the *Divinity* of *Chriſt* was the *Article* they maintained, though they ſhould

 differ

* Mr. *Reeve*'s Pref.
† *Ibid.* p. 5.

differ in their Explications of it. " Indeed, " was the *Chriſtian Religion* to be mended, " after it came out of the Hands of *Chriſt* " and his *Apoſtles*, and the Work expreſsly " left to the *Reaſoners* of latter Days; ſome- " thing might be ſaid for our *Modern Refiners*: " But all the mending that I know of late (ſays " Mr. *Reeve*) has been only *making Holes in the* " Creed and Conſtitution of our *Church*: And " that ſome *Free-Thinkers*, by the Help of " clear Ideas, have made a Shift to *reaſon* " themſelves clearly out of all *Goſpel-Myſtery*, " and the very *Canon* of Scripture it-ſelf."

*B.* By this firm Attachment of yours to the *Primitive Fathers*, it is eaſy to foreſee the *Diſpleaſure* you muſt draw on your ſelf, from great Numbers, that ſtill continue in the ſame Way of thinking, as I was three or four Years ago myſelf. The Society that I then belonged to, let me into one *Secret*, which I muſt diſcloſe to you before we *part*, becauſe it has a Relation both to you and to our *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, though you *differ* ſo much in your Principles.

*A.* The *Diſpleaſure* you foreſee, gives me no Manner of Pain. It is too apparent (as I told you in our *firſt* Day's *Conference*, from an * *Authority* that our Adverſaries will not care to diſpute) that " *abſolute Libertiniſm* is the " Thing they really aim at; and however their " *Creed*

* Part I. p. 11.

" *Creed* may pretend to be the *Creed* of *Deiſts*, " yet almoſt always their *Practice* is the Prac- " tice of very *Atheiſts*." Dr. *Clarke* has ſaid it in his *Boyle*'s Lectures; and, I think, our *Anti-Phlegoniſt* has not prevail'd to have it ſtruck out. I ſtill hope, ſuch Adverſaries may ſee their Errors: But the *Secret* you mention, ſurprizes me. Pray what is it?

*B.* The *Secret* is this: When any Member of *that* Society is minded to ſhew his Skill and Parts, in being profane, and in declaiming luſtily againſt *Revealed Religion*, (Leave being firſt obtained from the *Board*,) he often chuſes to *perſonate* a *Clergyman*, in the doing of it. Though your *Order* in general muſt (I fear) ſuffer from this *Helliſh* Proceeding, yet are they *ſuch* only, like your *Anti-Phlegoniſt*, (in my Opinion,) that muſt take the Shame to themſelves; they being the Occaſion of it: For your Attachment, as I ſay, to the *Primitive Fathers*, and *Fundamentals*, make a plain Diſtinction, and would otherwiſe ſpoil the Scheme of ſuch Wretches. I brought a *Pamphlet* with me this Morning, (and have it here in my Pocket,) drawn up by one of our young *Gentlemen* in Town; wherein he makes a *Country Clergyman* ſpeak thus to his Friend in * *London*, on account of an excellent Book lately publiſhed, that gives our *Free-Thinkers* a great deal of Diſturbance; as well it may. In-



* Remarks on the *Minute* Philoſopher. In a Letter from a *Country Clergyman* to his Friend in *London*. Printed for *J. Roberts*, 1732.

deed our *Younker*, who pretends to know, when a *Character* is preſerved, and when not, has ſadly overſhot himſelf in this Point: And no *Anti-Phlegoniſt* whatever, I dare ſay, ever came up to it: However, take the *Character* as it is now given to the Publick; and let our *Anti-Phlegoniſts*, *Deiſts*, *Socinians*, and *Arians*, conſider of it, and anſwer for the Conſequences, if only in regard to *Civil* Society. The *Clergyman* is made to ſet out in this Manner, by telling his Friend, "That he was not born a Fool, nor "educated a Blockhead: That he ſuppoſes the "Author of the *Minute Philoſopher* has Learn-"ing and Knowledge, *&c.* but that he intro-"duces Perſonages, without *preſerving Cha-"racters*; and has leaſt Perſpicuity where "the Reader will naturally have moſt Cu-"rioſity; which is an *irremiſſible Sin:* That, "in his Opinion, the Author of the *Minute "Philoſopher* is haſtening the Decay of the "Chriſtian Religion; at which he feels a very "great Reſentment: That the *Fable of the "Bees* ſneers a little at our modern *Reverend* "and *Right Reverend Apoſtles*, who are paid "for preaching what they do not practice, and "*propagating* what they do not underſtand: "That many well-diſpoſed People meaſure "their Merit to God, by the Difficulty they "find in reconciling their Belief to their Com-"prehenſion; and, with Dr. *Brown (Religio "Medici)* are ſorry that *God Almighty would*

"*not*

" *not have the Goodneſs to impoſe ſomething more*
" *incomprehenſible than the* Trinity, *&c.* That
" the *Pulpit* ought to do by the *Goſpel*, as
" *Weſtminſter-Hall* does by the *Law*; which is
" to determine by Authority, Preſcription, and
" Preſidents, what is Law, and not to *examine*
" *the Right* which the firſt Legiſlator had to
" inſtitute it, and make it ſuch. I am ſo fully
" convinced of this being the proper Office of
" a *Divine*, that, for my own Part, when any
" of theſe cavilling Genius's, who have a Mind
" to hamper *us Sticklers for Chriſtianity*, talk of
" *Enquiry*, I always anſwer, *Myſtery*; when
" they ask for *Proof*, I cry, *Faith*; if they
" raiſe *Doubts*, I quote *Authority*; and when-
" ever they mention *Reaſon*, I bid them con-
" ſult *Tradition*. By theſe Means, fighting
" with my *own Weapons*, and never *encounter-*
" *ing* them with their Arms, I always ſtand my
" Ground, and make my Party good. People
" are now come to conſider, not what is *meant*
" in the *Goſpel*, but whether that Meaning,
" when it is agreed upon, be *worth* the Search;
" or *the Goſpel it ſelf be worth minding*: They
" want to have the *Divinity* of *Chriſt*'s Miſſion
" itſelf *authenticated*; whereas that is a Point
" that ought never to come into play, any more
" than the *King at Cheſs*: Whenever they give
" him *Check*, your only Recourſe is, to *cover*
" it; and when you cannot cover it any longer,
" the *Game* is loſt."

*A.* This

*A.* This *perſonating a Clergyman*, and throwing out ſo much *Profaneſs* and *Infidelity*, in the doing of it, (may the Author timely repent, and find Mercy in the Day, that he ſhall ſtand in need of it!) puts me in mind of another Sort of *perſonating our Order*: When, after a Debauch, Pockets empty, and a warm Head, the young *Free-Thinking Rake* affects to reel Home in the *Habit of a Clergyman*; but being juſt able to belch out *Oaths* and terrible *Imprecations*, (thoſe habitual Imbelliſhments,) the Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing is ſoon diſcovered; the lewd Deſign as ſoon ends in his own Shame. If you ſhould happen to meet with any of your old *Fraternity*, let them tell the Author of this Pamphlet, to take care, when he perſonates a *Clergyman again*, that he don't *over-do* it; for, as he has remarked himſelf, if a *proper Character* is not preſerved, the *Deſign* is quite loſt in him that draws it. Such Venom, and ſo much rank Poiſon as this, muſt be better *gilded* over; otherwiſe, the *Compoſition*, it is to be hoped, will hurt no body but the filthy Hand that made it up. I dare ſay, your own good Judgment is not in the leaſt biaſſed; and if you are diſpoſed to dip any farther into *it*, it will have one Effect, and no other, in making us lament the Degeneracy of the Times we live in, and wiſh, and pray, that we may ſoon ſee *better*. Pleaſe to read on.

*B.* Our

*B. Our Clergyman* ſuppoſes, (Page 17.) but then he tells you, it is only for Argument ſake, "That the ſanguine Followers of *Chriſt*, in "the early Days of the Propagation of the "Goſpel, might poſſibly ſay a little more of "*him*, with regard to his *Parentage*, than was "ſtrictly and litterally *true*: But what then? "&c. Does it prove (ſays he) the Practice of "*his* Rules leſs conducive to the general Good "of Mankind? Was *Alexander* a leſs able "Captain, or his Conqueſts leſs glorious, be-"cauſe his Flatterers, in their mean Adula-"tion, told *a few Fables about his Birth*; "*and, in order to Deify his Extraction on his* "*Father's Side, ſaid, that* Jove *lay with his* "*Mother in the Shape of a Serpent?* All the "Wrangling and Jangling upon the ſtrict lito-"ral Meaning of *Moſes's* being inſpired, and "the conteſting God's perſonal Appearance to "him on *Mount Sinai, in order to depreciate* "Moſes's *Wiſdom as a Legiſlator*, is juſt as ri-"diculous. Were the Laws of *Numa Pom-"pilius* the worſe, becauſe he *pretended* they "were dictated to him by a *Divinity*? The "Story of the *Warming-Pan* was very proper "to be given out, when the *Revolution* was "but young. It had its Weight: But when "the good Effects of *it* came by Experience "and long Trial to be felt, thoſe *Frauds* that "were neceſſary in its Commencement, to de-"ceive People into their own Good, became

"gradually

" gradually quite *uſeleſs*; and no body now " troubles his Head, whether the Pretender is, " or is not an *Impoſtor.*" (You have heard the Blaſphemy, and I ſee your Aſtoniſhment.) This *Clergyman* is moreover made to argue thus, *viz.* (p. 38, 39.) " That, as for ſaying *Grace* before " and after Meat, (the Neglect of which the " *Minute Philoſopher* complains of,) no Inſtitu- " tion for divine Worſhip is, perhaps, more " liable to Objection than this. Addreſ- " ſing ourſelves to Heaven, (ſays he) becauſe " Food is neceſſary for our Support, ſeems to " me no more a *reaſonable* Act of Chriſtian " Piety, than it would be for any *intemperate* " *Whoremonger* to throw up a little Hymn of " Praiſe in a *Baudy-Houſe*, becauſe the World " would ceaſe without the Uſe of Women. The *Profane* Raillery on this Subject, is carried on to ſuch a Height, by this poor miſerable *depending* Creature, that I cannot go on with it: And, I am to ſuppoſe, that out of *ſixty five* Pages, of horrid *Blaſphemy* and *Profaneſs*, you have heard enough from *two* or *three* of them. The only Objection I have to that excellent Work, called the *Minute Philoſopher*, is, that he is ſometimes too *abſtruſe* and *intricate*, (at leaſt to my Capacity,) where he ought to have been moſt plain and intelligible: And ſo far this *Remarker*, ſeems to me, to be in the Right, when he ſays, " *Metaphyſicks* are an improper " *Method* to take for the Support of *Chriſti-*

" *anity*;

" *nity*, becauſe whatever is deſigned for common " Uſe, ſhould be levelled to common Apprehen- " ſions; and whatever is to be univerſally re- " ceived, ought to be univerſally underſtood." I deſire to hear more of your well-atteſted *Facts*; and after that, your own *Reaſoning* upon them. Your *appealing* in that Manner, where *Reaſon* and *Enquiry* have their full Scope allowed them, for proving or diſproving ſuch *Facts*, is the *Method* that beſt pleaſes me, for *evincing* the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and its *primitive* Doctrines. *Adieu.* I heartily wiſh you a good Night.

*A.* Remember Dean *Prideaux*'s two Reflections *. *Adieu.*

* Above, Pag. 9, 10, 11, 12.

*FINIS.*

# ADVERTISEMENT.



DR. *Sykes* having thought fit, in his *Diſſertation* (Page [illegible]) to ſtile the *Greek* Epiſtle of *Dionyſius* the Areopagite (Biſhop of *Athens*) an *abſurd Romance*; and afterwards running into great *Abſurdities* himſelf, either by not underſtanding, or rather wilfully perverting the Senſe of ſome Paſſages in that *Epiſtle*, (as has been ſhewn at large, and the *Genuineneſs* of *it* aſſerted, in this and the following *Conference*,) it was judged proper to make a large *Extract* from the Epiſtle itſelf; ſuch as might be ſufficient to ſet the Affair in a better Light, and to convince the *Engliſh* Reader, that the ſaid *Epiſtle* does not deſerve the opprobrious Name of a *Romance*; there being, in Truth, no *Marks* of *Spuriouſneſs* throughout the Whole of *it*. Happening unwarily * (not having his *Diſſertation* then by me) to charge this Writer with *omitting* the laſt Words in that *Extract*, which I ſince find to be otherwiſe, and that they were taken by him out of *Suidas* likewiſe: I hereby acknowledge the *Miſtake*; as I ſhall be ready to do any *other*, when made appear to be *one*.

* *Fourth Conference*, Page 141.

AN

# APPEAL

TO THE

# Genuine Records.

## PART II. CONFERRENCE V.

*B.* WEll met Sir! I was coming to give you another troubleſome Viſit. I find, this Park has its pleaſures even in Winter: However I had now much rather adjourn to your warm ſtudy, and hear *Lucian* give his Evidence about that remarkable verſe in St. John's iſt Ep. *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven* &c. You told me, I remember, the laſt time, that none ever had been ſo hardy, as to call in queſtion the *Genuineſs* of this Epiſtle; and if *Lucian* made himſelf merry with *this Verſe*, the beginning of the *ſecond Centnry*, I hope we ſhall hear no more of its *ſpuriouſneſs* from our *Arians* and *Free-*

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*think-*

*thinking* Gentry. You told me likewiſe, that the late learned Dr. *Cave* Canon of *Windſor*, has ſet this affair of *Lucian*'s in a fine light, highly convincing to any unprejudic'd Reader, above what Bp. *Bull* and others have ſaid upon the ſame Subject. It ſeems, tis yet in *M.S*: being part of his *Hiſtoria Literaria*, that the World has been ſo long enquiring after. I own I begin to be ſomewhat impatient, till you ſummon this *Lucian* and the Venerable *Canon*. I'm ſorry, *that* trifling *Anti-Phlegoniſt* ſhould have been the occaſion of poſtponing *them* ſo long.

*A.* You ſee a *new* Pamphlet lying on the Table: It belongs to Your *Ant. Phl.* He has been lately looking out *afreſh*, for a juſter calculation, than his friend *Whiſton* gave Him; and He is now very ſanguine, that his *November* Eclipſe is the very Eclipſe that *Phlegon* ſpeaks of; ſo that the Antients who *Appeal,d* to the *Roman Records* about it, are either now (He ſays) all of *his ſide*, † or elſe that they were miſerably miſtaken, and did not Know what they were a doing, when they made ſuch an *Appeal* in defenſe of Chriſtianity. Now, I leave you to Judge, whether this Man's *Sincerity* or his *Knowledge* are moſt to be call'd in queſtion. The *different Supputation* of years, as to the Reign of *Tiberius* (well Known to the learned World) is what our *Anti-Phl:* either artfully conceals, or is ſhamefully ignorant of. He ſtiles the accurate *Africanus* p. 39 &c. *inaccurate*, becauſe He, as well as *Tertullian*, *Lactantius* and others ſaid, that Chriſt ſuffered in the XVth of Tiberius; whereas, let but the *Proconſular*

† *Sykes*'s Def. p. 40.

*Conſular* and *Imperial* Government of *Tiberius* be carefully attended to, and the *different* Supputations conſequent thereupon; and which were long obſerv'd in the World, till *Euſebius* firſt began to *reform* in the matter;) all the mighty *Difficulties*, with which your *Anti-Phl.* has been amuſing the World, vaniſh at once; and when the time of year and manner of computing from the beginning of the Emperor's Reign is further remark'd; the Difference of about *three* years, which is the *Miſt* caſt before People's Eyes, will be clearly accounted for; and was always well underſtood by thoſe who were ſeemingly at ſo much variance in the matter. Nay depend on't, you will find no occaſion to make ſo many ſcruples and Doubts about the *Year* of ſuch or ſuch an *Olympiad*; when you are once inform'd, upon good Authority, that there are even *two* ways of computing by the *Olympiads*. In ſhort, our *Anti-Phl:* will never do his Cauſe any ſervice by Calculation of Eclipſes, tho' they ſhou'd be *amended* ſeveral times more for Him by the ableſt Hands.

The *Appeals* that have been made to the *Roman Records* concerning a *Preternatural* Eclipſe; and ſuch *Appeals* never contradicted; *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe alſo nam'd as *ſuch*; theſe things are a *Stubborn Fact*; that ſuperſedes all ſuch Methods of confuting *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony. No body diſputes the *Natural Eclipſe* that *Kepler* and our *Moderns* calculate. But let Him get the ableſt Mathematician to ſay, that *ſuch* Eclipſe was actually *Phlegon*'s: this is the Point; when that is done, I will only reply in the words of

*Scaliger*; † 'Phlegon in his Chronicle was not silent, 'even touching the *Miracles* of Christ. *Tertullian* 'had *Phlegon*'s Testimony in his Thoughts, when '(in his Apologetick) He says, *In the same moment* 'that Christ dismiss'd Life, the Light departed from 'the Sun, and the World was benighted at noon day,---- 'and this wonder of the World you have related, and 'the Relation preserved in your Archives.' Our *Anti-Phl.* will perhaps soon have the honour done Him, of having these last words of *Tertullian* struck out of Dr. S. *Clarke*'s Boyle's Lectures, as well as the Testimony of *Phlegon*; tho' they have stood there unmolested for *seven* Editions together. This is the *Problem*, that even Mr. *Wh.* cannot solve.

*B.* I was in great hopes, there had been no farther occasion for spending Time upon this *second* trifling performance, which I have read too with some sort of resentment, I own; having beforehand pretty well digested all that had passed at our last Meeting: I am glad to find, He is growing sick of such sort of Work; I wish I could hear of his Repentance too, as to the *disservice* He has been doing Christianity. * He says, 'He shall now 'dismiss all thoughts of a further Examination of this subject --- 'Tis high time indeed so to do---- whether Mr. *Wh*'s- *Copernicus* will likewise be laid aside in this matter I can't say; nor much do

† *Phlegon* in Cronicis ne de Christi quidem *Miraculis* tacuit. *Phlegontis* Testimonium habebat in animo *Tertullianus* quando ait, *Eodem Momento Dies*, &c. Scalig. Animadv. in Euseb. Cron.

* p. 61.

do I care. I hear, He intends ſhortly to *explain Phlegon*'s Eclipſe. What the meaning of *that* is, I don't well know. I think you quoted an old ſcholiaſt *Maximus*, when I laſt ſaw you, who had ſeen *Phlegon*'s Works, and ſays expreſsly, that *Phlegon* had not offered to *explain* it, or had given no account of the *manner* of it. † I am ſatisfied, we ſhall never have *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony either confuted or cleared up *that* Way. However, tis Amazing, to ſee our *Anti-phl:* making his Controverſial *exit* after ſuch an obſtinate manner as He does, without any ſigns of Remorſe for the miſchief his Pamphlets are every day doing amongſt our young Libertines. 'Whatever my Abilities are, ſays He, 'p. 72. which I freely acknowledge to be not 'great, yet be they more or leſs, Truth I love, and 'Truth I conſtantly ſearch after &c.' I ſaw his two Pamphlets the other Day, I mean his *Diſſertation* and *Defence*, lying upon the Table, cloſe by the well-thumb'd *Quarto*, at the ſame Houſe, whence I gave you ſome account, when I laſt ſaw you. There was now indeed a much greater Appearance, than before: and all concluded, that Thanks was due to our *Anti-Phl.* and ſaid moreover, that they did not diſlike his Way of *explaining* ſome *Prophecies*, no more than they did his *Defence* of the Anſwer to the *Remarks* upon Dr. *Clarke's* Expoſition of the Church Catechiſm. I endeavoured to make the beſt uſe I could of the Reflections which they made on this occaſion; and I am pretty ſure the Con-

† Ὁ μὲν τὸν τρόπον ἀνέγραψε.

Converſation ended, in ſhewing the *unreaſonable-neſs of Infidelity* in regard to *Revelation.*

*A.* I ſhould not have troubled you with any thing farther about *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony, (for, I think, nothing in our *Anti-Phl. Defence* does require it) but purely to clear up farther, and Juſtify what I have already ſaid; and to make ſome few Remarks upon theſe obſtinate miſtakes our *Anti-Phl.* ſeems reſolved to adhere to. I perceive, you have been engaging with a great number of *Deiſts.* I am in ſome pain, how you behaved in that Matter; and what method you could take, to give you ſuch an aſſurance of Victory.

*B.* You will be Surprized, when I tell You. If I may be allowed to ſay it, There was ſome ſort of *Fineſſe* in the doing of it. Dr. *Prideaux*'s two Reflections, as you adviſed me, were a piece of Armour that did me real Service; and when I found it was proof, I attack'd them with *Weapons* they were not at firſt Aware of. Upon my requiring, that they would give a plain and explicit account of their *Natural Religion*, which I Promis'd, I would either except to, in giving the beſt Reaſons I could; or elſe acquieſce in what they ſaid; I ſoon found, they were much divided in their Religious Scheme. No leſs than *Four* different Opinions Prevailed amongſt them, concerning their Religion; which, you'l ſay, made the Conqueſt ſtill eaſier on my Side. One of them ſaid to me, that, for his part, whatever opprobious Diſtinctions the *Deiſts* might labour under, He ſhould for ever diſclaim the name of an *Atheiſt*; for that He did be-

believe the Exiſtence of an Eternal, Infinite, Independent, Intelligent Being; and that this Supreme Being *made* the World; tho at the ſame time, He could not help thinking, as the *Epicureans* did, that this Supreme Being does not at all concern Himſelf in the Govern ment of the World. The Reply made was this; To fancy, that the Supreme Being, after creating a certain *Quantity of Matter and Motion*, ſhould leave them to frame a World without any determinate and particular View, deſign or direction: can no way be defended conſiſtently, but muſt of neceſſity recur to downright *Atheiſm*. I was going on to enforce the Argument, when another ſtreight interrupted me, ſaying, that He beleived not only the *Being* but alſo the *Providence* of God; and therefore muſt differ in opinion ſo far from the Gentleman I was talking to. I reply'd; his *Scheme* ſhould be immediately hearkened to; and I made no queſtion, but that *his*, though more plauſible, would be found very defective. Addreſſing my ſelf then again to the firſt perſon, I proceeded thus; the late Improvements in Mathematicks and Natural Philoſophy have diſcovered, that, as things now are, ſuch a *Scheme* as yours is plainly falſe and impoſſible in Fact. Since *Matter* is utterly uncapable of obeying any Laws; the very original Laws of Motion themſelves cannot continue to take place, but by ſomething Superior to matter, *continually* exerting on it a certain force, or power, according to ſuch certain and determinate Laws. Tis moreover now evident beyond queſtion, that the Bodies of all *Plants* and *Animals*,

*nimals*, Much the moſt conſiderable parts of the World, could not poſſibly have been formed by meer Matter according to any general Laws of Motion. And not only ſo; but *that* moſt univerſal principle of *Gravitation* itſelf, the ſpring of almoſt all the great and regular inanimate Motions in the World, anſwering not at all to the *Surfaces* of Bodies, (by which alone they can act one upon another) but entirely to their *ſolid Content*; cannot poſſibly be the reſult of any Motion originally impreſſed on Matter, but muſt of neceſſity be cauſed (either *immediately* or *mediately*) by ſomething which penetrates the very ſolid ſubſtance of all Bodies, and continually puts forth in them a force or power entirely different from *that* by which Matter acts upon matter. The Gentleman here interpoſed, ſaying, that *Gravitation*, He believed, was a *Secret* that the Almighty had reſerved, as ſuch: which I readily admitted; and hoped, He would allow, that many more *ſecret things did belong* to the ſame Infinite Being. I then deſired him farther to attend to the force of the ſame Argument which demonſtrably proved, not only that the World was made originally by a Supreme Intelligent Cauſe; but that moreover it *depended every Moment* on ſome Superior Being, for the *Preſervation* of its Frame: and that all the great Motions in it are cauſed by ſome *Immaterial* Power, not having *originally* impreſſed a *certain Quantity of Motion* upon Matter, but *perpetually and actually* exerting itſelf every Moment in every part of the World. which *preſerving and governing Power*, whether it be *immediately* the

Power

Power and action of the ſame Supreme Cauſe that created the World; of Him, *without whom* not a Sparrow falls to the ground, and *with whom the very Hairs of our Head are all numbred*; or whether it be the action of ſome *ſubordinate Inſtruments* appointed by Him to direct and preſide reſpectively over certain parts thereof; does either way equally give us a very noble Idea of *Providence*.

*A.* I begin now to gueſs at the Quiver, whence you took your Arrows; and I like the *Deſign*: for there is more hope of Succeſs, when Arguments are brought from *that Quarter*: But perhaps the Gentlemen did not yet perceive, in what Manner you was preſſing them.

*B.* I much queſtion, whether they did or no: for, generally Speaking, theſe ſort of Refiners upon the Reaſon of Mankind, chuſe rather to *talk* of Books than to read them throughly and digeſt them: But be that as it will in the preſent Caſe, when Arguments are ſtrong and good, they ought to have their Weight, and will have their force in every unprejudic'd Mind; yet ſtill *they* are eaſier apprehended, ſooner admitted, and make a deeper impreſſion, if they come offered by one, whoſe Judgment we very much eſteem and value in other matters. I was told however, that I had by no means made good the main thing I undertook to prove; for admitting, ſays He, that your Argument hitherto is concluſive, concerning a *governing and preſerving Power*, in the manner you have laid it down; yet what is that to the monſtrous charge of *Atheiſm*, that you

juſt now made? I told you, that I did believe in a Supreme Being, and that this Supreme Being made the World. Now, becauſe I did not carry my Belief farther, as to the *governing and preſerving part*; you draw a conſequence, that my opinion muſt of neceſſity recur to *down-right Atheiſm*. I ſay, this remains yet to be prov'd: and ſo bid me go on. I proceeded thus;

That I was ſatisfied, there were many Perſons in the World, who, thro' a certain Vanity of Philoſophizing, are tempted to embrace the *ſame Opinion* with Himſelf, without attending whither it would lead 'em; and therefore I ſo far agreed, that neither He nor they ought to be directly *charged* with all the *Conſequences* of it. But 'tis certain, many under *that* Cover have really been *Atheiſts*; and the Opinion itſelf, I again ſay, leads *neceſſarily*, and by unavoidable Conſequence, to plain *Atheiſm*. For, if God be an All-powerful-Omniprefent, Intelligent, Wiſe and Free Being (as you muſt acknowledge) He cannot poſſibly but *know*, at all Times and in all Places, every thing that *is*; and *foreknow* what at all Times and in all Places 'tis fitteſt and wiſeſt *ſhould be*; and have perfect *Power*, without the leaſt labour, difficulty, or oppoſition, to *order and bring to paſs* what He ſo judges fit to be accompliſhed: and conſequently it is impoſſible, but He muſt actually direct and appoint every particular thing and circumſtance, that is in the World or ever ſhall be, excepting only what by his own Pleaſure He puts under the power and choice of ſubordinate Free Agents. If there-

fore

fore God does not concern Himself in the Government of the World, nor has any regard to what is done therein; it will follow, that he is not an Omnipresent, All-powerful, Intelligent and Wise Being; and consequently, that He is not at all. Wherefore, the Opinion of such sort of *Deists* as yourself, stands not upon any consistent Principles, but leads unavoidably to *downright Atheism*. The Gentleman who first interrupted me in this Reply, thinking I had dwelt too long upon it, told me again,

II. That He could not agree with the Gentleman, that I had been engag'd with; For, tho' a *Deist*, He readily allow'd, that every *natural* thing that is done in the World, is produc'd by the Power, appointed by the Wisdom, and directed by the Government of God: But then, He could not so easily allow of the Difference, as is generally maintain'd, between *Moral Good and Evil*; and therefore was of an Opinion, that God does not take notice of the *morally good or evil Actions of Men*; but rather thought, these things depended merely on the arbitrary Constitution of humane Laws. The Answer made to him was this;

That, though he seem'd to speak honourably of the *natural* Attributes of God, such as his Knowledge, Wisdom and Power; yet such an Opinion could not be settled on any certain Principles, nor defended by any consistent Reasoning; that the *natural Attributes* of God cannot be so separated from the *moral*, but that He who denies the latter, may be reduced to a Necessity of denying the for-

mer likewiſe. For ſince (as it has been thoroughly prov'd by Perſons whoſe Learning and Judgment you will by no means call in queſtion) there cannot but be eternal and neceſſary Differences of different things one from another; and from theſe neceſſary Differences of things, there cannot but ariſe a Fitneſs or Unfitneſs of the Application of different things or different Relations one to another; and infinite Knowledge can no more fail to know, or infinite Wiſdom to chooſe, or infinite Power to act according to theſe eternal Reaſons and proportions of Things, than Knowledge can be Ignorance, Wiſdom be Folly, or Power Weakneſs; and conſequently the *Juſtice* and *Goodneſs* of God are as certain and neceſſary, as his Wiſdom and Power: It follows unavoidably, that He who denies the *Juſtice* or *Goodneſs* of God, or, which is all one, denies his Exerciſe of theſe Attributes, in inſpecting and regarding the *moral* Actions of Men, muſt alſo deny, either his Wiſdom or his Power, or both; and conſequently muſt needs be driven into *abſolute Atheiſm*.

*A.* I confeſs, this is good Reaſoning, not to be confuted by the ſtrongeſt Heads amongſt your old *Fraternity*: but, it ſeems to be a little too *Metaphyſical* for the younger ſort of 'em. I hope, you illuſtrated this from the *Practice* of ſuch ſort of *Deiſts*: for, let their Profeſſions be never ſo honourable concerning ſome particular Attributes of God; we may in this Caſe judge of their true Opinion from their *Practice*.

*B.* This,

*B.* This, you'll ſay, was a tender Point; but, as I thought it a proper Time to ſpeak the Truth, I took the Liberty of obſerving, that it could not be deny'd, but that the *Practice and Behaviour* of ſuch, as maintain'd the like Opinions with Himſelf and the Gentleman I had been talking with before, was generally agreeable to *that* of the moſt openly profeſs'd *Atheiſts*. I obſerv'd it, as a thing too notorious, that they do not only oppoſe the *Revelation* of Chriſtianity, and reject all the *moral* Obligations of *Natural* Religion, as ſuch; but generally they deſpiſe alſo the Wiſdom of all *Humane Conſtitutions* made for the Order and Benefit of Mankind; and are as much Contemners of *common Decency* as they are of *Religion*. They pretend commonly in their Diſcourſe and Writings, to expoſe the Abuſes and Corruptions of Religion; but (as is too manifeſt in ſome of their Books, as well as in their Talk) they aim really againſt all Virtue in general, and all good Manners, and againſt whatſoever is truly valuable and commendable in Men. They pretend to ridicule certain Vices and Follies of ignorant or ſuperſtitious Men; but the many very profane and lewd Images, with which they induſtriouſly affect to dreſs up their Diſcourſe, ſhow plainly, that they really do not ſo much intend to expoſe and deride any Vice or Folly, as on the contrary to foment and pleaſe the debauched and vicious Inclinations of others as void of Shame as themſelves. They diſcover clearly, that they have no ſenſe at all of the Dignity of humane Nature, nor of the Superiority

and

and Excellency of their Reaſon above even the meaneſt of Brutes. They will ſometimes in Words ſeem to magnify the Wiſdom and other natural Attributes of God; but in reality, by ridiculing whatever bears any Reſemblance to it in Men, they ſhow undeniably, that they do not indeed believe there is any real Difference in Things, or any true Excellency in one thing more than in another. They ſeem not to have any Eſteem or Value for thoſe diſtinguiſhing Powers and Faculties, with whcih God has endow'd them, and by which He has (*Job* 35. 11.) *taught them more than the Beaſts of the Field, and made them wiſer than the Fowls of Heaven.* In a word, *Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any praiſe*; theſe things they make the conſtant Subject of their mockery and abuſe, ridicule and raillery. On the contrary, whatſoever things are profane, impure, filthy and diſhonourable; theſe things they make it their Buſineſs to repreſent as harmleſs and indifferent, and to laugh Men out of their natural ſhame and abhorrence of them; nay, even to recommend them with their utmoſt Wit. Such Men as theſe, I took the freedom to ſay, are not to be argued with, till they can be perſuaded to uſe *Arguments* inſtead of *Drollery*. For *Banter* is not capable of being anſwered by *Reaſon*: not becauſe it has any Strength in it; but becauſe it runs out of all the Bounds of Reaſon and good Senſe, by extravagantly joining

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together ſuch Images, as have not in themſelves any manner of Similitude or Connexion; by which means, all things are alike eaſie to be render'd ridiculous, by being repreſented only in an abſurd Dreſs.

*A.* I eaſily imagine, that you was now told, that you *rail'd* inſtead of *diſputed*; tho' it is obvious to the whole World, that what you ſaid to 'em is matter of Fact: but the polite Age we live in, will not allow of ſuch a Procedure. They call it a Breach of *good Manners*, and that it often hinders the Force of a nervous Argument, and conſequently does diſſervice to the very Cauſe 'tis defending. I am very ſure, (as I could ſhew by innumerable Inſtances, were it neceſſary) that the *primitive* Writers thought otherwiſe of the Matter. They did not only preſs their Adverſaries by dint of Argument and ſound Reaſoning; but their Blaſphemy, or Profaneneſs, or an irreverent Treatment of things ſacred, often made it neceſſary for 'em beſides to *rebuke ſharply*, which is now call'd *Railing*. And let any of thoſe well-meaning Perſons, who practiſe theſe *ſoft* Methods of convincing ſuch ſort of People as you have been deſcribing; let 'em, I ſay, tell me, where *ſuch Methods* have been found ſucceſsful. 'Till that is made appear, I cannot think that any Perſon, who is manifeſtly doing *diſſervice* to the Chriſtian Religion, and openly perſiſts in the doing of it, is entitled to any other Uſage than what the Apoſtle has preſcribed on the like Occaſions.

*B.* You

*B.* Your Conjecture about *Railing* is very right. I was ſoon told, that He who had made me ſuch a Philoſopher and Reaſoner in ſo ſmall a time, did not teach me to behave with ſo much ill Manners; and that no Gentleman of Learning and good Senſe could ſay ſuch things, or ever think of being ſucceſsful, either in converſing or writing after ſuch a manner as that. I own, I could not help ſmiling at the *Rebuke*; thinking, it would not be long before I ſhould find my Advantage from it. Having promis'd, that at preſent there ſhould be no more ſuch *plaineſs* of Speech uſed, but downright Argument; another Gentleman directing himſelf to me, ſaid, that He thought the Religion of a *Deiſt* was not yet truly repreſented by either of thoſe Gentlemen that I had been talking with; and deſir'd that I would not leave 'em with any wrong Notion that I might entertain of the matter. He then proceeded, in aſſuring me.

III. That he did believe the ſupreme Being to be a Being of infinite Juſtice, Goodneſs and Truth; that He governs the Univerſe by theſe Perfections, and expects ſuitable Obedience from all his Rational Creatures. But then I ſoon found, that this was ſpoken in a *qualified* Senſe: for when I came to preſs him about the *Immortality* of *Humane Souls*, I found it was a Notion He did not care to come into. He was rather inclin'd to think, he ſaid, that one Generation will *perpetually* be ſucceeding another: but that there would be no *future* Reſtoration or Renovation of Things. He moreover told me, that He thought Mankind

were

were not ſufficient Judges concerning the *Atributes* of God, ſo as to argue from thence with any aſſurance of the Certainty of a *future State*. He was immediately anſwer'd,

That his Opinion could not ſtand upon any conſiſtent Principle: For if Juſtice and Goodneſs be not the *ſame* in God, as in our *Ideas*, then we mean nothing, when we ſay that God is neceſſarily juſt and good: And for the ſame Reaſon, it may as well be ſaid, that we know not what we mean, when we affirm, that He is an Intelligent and Wiſe Being; and there will be no Foundation at all left, on which we can fix any thing. Thus the *moral* Attributes of God, I told him, however he ſeem'd to acknowledge 'em in *Words*; yet in reality he deſtroy'd 'em; and upon the ſame Grounds, the *natural* Attributes may be alſo deny'd: ſo that upon the whole, ſuch an Opinion, if it be argu'd upon conſiſtently, muſt finally recur to abſolute *Atheiſm*.

*A.* One would think after theſe *ſeveral Opinions*, our Free-thinking Gentry ſhou'd grow aſham'd of their having ſo many fancied *Schemes* of Religion; and not venture to pull down the Chriſtian, till they are able to ſubſtitute a better in the room of it. There are ſome *Deiſts* indeed, who would be thought to improve vaſtly upon theſe *three* Opinions that you have been giving an account of: and if they did indeed *believe* what they *pretend*, they would be (like the Man in the Goſpel) *not far from the Kingdom of God*.

*B.* Juſt ſuch a *Pretender*, a little before I left the Aſſembly, addreſs'd himſelf to me, deſiring I would take notice, that the *Deiſts Religion* had not been yet *fully explain'd*, as it ought to have been; that he was ready to do it; and when that was done, he did expect that I would make ſome Reply or other to it, before the whole Company. This being conſented to; a ſly, old, blear-ey'd, hypocritical *Deiſt* argued thus, *viz.*

IV. That the *Deiſts*, in the main, were often groſsly miſrepreſented; and he hop'd, thoſe that had now given their *Opinions*, would think better on't, and come entirely into his *Syſtem*; which was this: That an Infinite Being did unqueſtionably make the World for the Manifeſtation of his Power and Wiſdom, and to communicate his Goodneſs and Happineſs to his Creatures; that He preſerves it by His continual, all-wiſe Providence, and governs it according to the eternal Rules of Infinite Juſtice, Equity, Goodneſs, Mercy and Truth: That all Rational Beings, depending continually upon Him, are bound to adore, worſhip, and obey Him; to praiſe Him for all things they enjoy, and to pray to him for every thing they want; that Men, in particular, are every one obliged to make it their Buſineſs, by an univerſal Benevolence, to promote the Happineſs of all others; that every Man is bound to have an exact Government of his Paſſions, and carefully to abſtain from all Debaucheries and Abuſes of himſelf, which tend either to the deſtruction of his own Being, or to the diſorderiug of his Faculties, and diſabling him

from

from performing his Duty: and laſtly, that accordingly as Men regard or neglect theſe Obligations, ſo they are proportionably acceptable or diſpleaſing unto God; who, being ſupreme Governor of the World, cannot but teſtify his Favour or Diſpleaſure at ſome time or other; and conſequently, ſince this is not done in the preſent State, therefore there muſt be a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments in a Life to come.

I told him, I believ'd there were few ſuch *Deiſts* among modern Deniers of *Revelation*. To profeſs all this, and yet to believe it only ſo far, as 'tis diſcoverable by the Light of Nature alone, without believing *Divine Revelation*, was not to be defended upon conſiſtent Principles. A little Attention to the Conſequences of what he had now profeſs'd to believe, ſhould, methinks, naturally carry him farther, to embrace Chriſtianity: For, if his Profeſſions were now *ſincere*, I was then to ſuppoſe him fully convinced of two very material Points, *viz.* of the *Obligations of Natural* Religion; and the Certainty of *a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments*. And how then? He could not but obſerve, and own, what little Uſe Men generally are able to make of the *Light of Reaſon*, to diſcover the *one*, or to convince themſelves effectually of the Certainty and Importance of the *other*. And if that be the Caſe, 'tis impoſſible but they muſt be ſenſible of the want of a *Revelation*; 'tis impoſſible but they muſt earneſtly deſire God would be pleaſed, by ſome direct Diſcovery of his Will, to make theſe things more *clear* and *plain*, more *eaſy* and

*obvious*, more *certain* and *evident* to all Capacities? 'tis impoſſible but they muſt wiſh, God would be pleaſed particularly, to ſignify expreſsly the *acceptableneſs* of Repentance, and his willingneſs to forgive returning Sinners; 'tis impoſſible, but they muſt be very ſollicitous to have ſome more particular and certain Information concerning the Nature of that *future State*, which Reaſon teaches them in general to expect. The Conſequence of this, is, that they muſt needs be poſſeſs'd beforehand with a *ſtrong Hope*, that the Chriſtian Revelation may, upon due Examination, appear to be *true*. They muſt be infinitely far from *ridiculing* and *deſpiſing* any thing that claims to be a *Divine Revelation*, before they have *ſincerely* and thoroughly examin'd it to the bottom. They muſt needs be before-hand very much diſpoſed in *its* favour, and be very willing to be convinc'd, that, what tends *to the advancing and perfecting the Obligations of Natural Religion*, to the ſecuring their great Hopes, and aſcertaining the Truth of a Future State of Rewards and Puniſhments; and can *any way* be made appear to be worthy of God, and conſiſtent with his Attributes; and has any reaſonable Proof of the *Matters of Fact* it depends upon; is really and truly what it pretends to be, a *Divine Revelation*. I then *appeal'd* to his own Breaſt, whether 'twas poſſible that he could be *ſincerely* of the *Opinion*, that he ſaid he was; and not to have ſuch *Diſpoſitions* as theſe? I then told 'em all, that it was very evident, from what had paſs'd, that they had no conſiſtent *Scheme* of *Deiſm* amongſt themſelves;

and

and that the Caſe was not *now*, as it was of old among the *Heathen Philoſophers*: The Scheme of *Deiſm* is not any longer conſiſtent with its own Principles, if it does not *now* lead Men to embrace and believe *Revelation*, as it did of *old* teach them to *hope* for it. I was, after this, told by 'em all, that a *ſecond Volume in Quarto* was ſoon to come out, and then I ſhould find all my fine Arguments fully confuted; which was an Anſwer, you eaſily imagine, gave me ſome Pleaſure; for let the 2d Volume of *Chriſtianity as old as the Creation*, &c. appear when it will, and be as well *thumb'd* as the *firſt* has been; I am perſuaded, that it will only diſcover more *Obſtinacy* and *Inſincerity*, and a ſtronger Inclination to traduce and beſpatter the *Teſtimonies* of ancient and modern Writers; as the Authors have done in the *firſt*: but their Cauſe, I'm ſatisfied, will ſtill ſtand upon the ſame ſandy Foundation it has done hitherto.

*A.* I'm mightily pleas'd to ſee, that you acquitted yourſelf in *this manner*; and I believe, none but this *old Fraternity* of yours, will be diſpleaſed, when they come to know the *Method* you took in diſputing with 'em; or *whoſe* the Weapons were that you made uſe of in this Engagement. But, pray, what paſs'd remarkable at parting? or did they diſmiſs you in the like ſullen Mood, as when they threaten'd you with a 2d Vol. in *Quarto*?

*B.* I took up Dr. *Sykes*'s two Pamphlets, which I told you ſome time ago lay upon the Table, and bid 'em all take notice, that Mr. *Boyle*'s Lectures, (which thoſe Pamphlets referr'd to) preach'd and publiſh'd

by

by the late Dr. S. *Clarke*, did contain all the *Arguments* that I had made uſe of at their Board in Defence of *Divine Revelation*, and that very often their Objections happen'd to be in his own Words: ſo that I deſir'd, when their 2d *Volume* came out, that thoſe *Arguments* might be conſider'd and examin'd as Dr. *Clarke*'s, and not as *mine*: and I made no queſtion, but, when they had ſo conſider'd 'em, there would be enow to juſtify the Soundneſs of them; and to ſhew, that *they* will ever be unanſwerable. But I deſir'd 'em firſt to anſwer Dr. *Stebbing*, as to their XIVth Chapter. I made no queſtion, I ſaid, but that, as often as they viſited the *Royal Hermitage*, and ſaw Dr. *Clarke*'s *Buſto*, they would think of *theſe Arguments*; and gratefully acknowledge the bounteous Hand, that had plac'd there ſo ſtrenuous a Defender of *Divine Revelation* in general.

*A.* The Cloſe after this, I ſuppoſe, was a profound Silence; 'bating the uſual Form of *Your humble Servant Sir, Adieu.*

*B.* It happen'd quite otherwiſe. They own'd, they ever had a great regard to the Name of Dr. S. *Clarke*: But Dr. *Sykes*, they ſaid, in thoſe two Pamphlets had taught 'em not to lay ſo much Streſs, as they had done, upon what Dr. *Clarke* ſhould ſay concerning Chriſtianity. They bid me recollect, in what Light that Gentleman had plac'd thoſe venerable Fathers, *Juſtin* M. and *Tertullian*, *in their* way of propagating Chriſtianity: and why might not Dr. *Clarke* (they ſaid) be guilty in like manner? 'Tis plain, ſay they, that the Lecturer of St. *James*'s charges the late Rector with having

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liv'd on for many Years together, in alledging a Teſtimony (a Matter of *Fact*) in behalf of Chriſtianity, that, He ſays, had no relation to it: and if this be true; why may not Dr. *Clarke* be miſtaken in other material Points relating to the Chriſtian Religion? I thought it then ſufficient to anſwer, that what I had now laid before 'em from Dr. *Clarke*, were not Matters of *Fact*, but plain *Reaſoning* (ſuch as they always declar'd for) and juſt Deductions drawn in behalf of the Points He had been debating.

*A.* Your *Diſtinction* was certainly very right; and after this, I take it for granted, no more was ſaid.

*B.* I was willing to purſue the Blow, that, by Dr. *Clarke*'s means, I had given 'em; ſo deſir'd 'em to remember, that the *Railing* (as they call'd it) which they objected to me, was Dr. *Clarke*'s likewiſe, and not mine; and, if they had Patience, they ſhould hear a little more of it from the Words of the ſame Author; requeſting, that they would ſhew the Weakneſs of it alſo in their 2d Volume. I then began, in ſaying; 'Deiſts, in our Days, 'who obſtinately reject *Revelation* when offer'd 'to them, are not ſuch Men as *Socrates* and *Tully* 'were; but, under pretence of *Deiſm*, 'tis plain, 'they are generally *Ridiculers* of all that is truly 'excellent even in *Natural Religion* itſelf. He that 'cannot prevail with Himſelf to obey the *Chri-* 'ſtian Doctrine, and embrace thoſe Hopes *of Life* 'and Immortality, which our Saviour has *brought* 'to Light through the Goſpel; cannot *now* be ima-'gined to maintain with any Firmneſs, Steddi-

neſs

' neſs and Certainty, the Belief of the *Immortality*
' *of the Soul*, and a *future State of Rewards and Pu-*
' *niſhments* after Death; becauſe all the main Dif-
' ficulties and Objections lie equally againſt *both*.
' Such then is the preſent corrupted State of the
' World; ſuch is the Careleſsneſs, Inconſiderate-
' neſs and want of Attention of the greater Part
' of Mankind; ſo many the Prejudices and falſe
' Notions imbibed by evil Education; ſo ſtrong
' and violent the unreaſonable Luſts, Appetites
' and Deſires of Senſe; and ſo great the Blind-
' neſs, introduced by ſuperſtitious Opinions, vici-
' ous Cuſtoms; and debauched Practices through
' the World; that very few are able, in reality
' and effect, to diſcover theſe things clearly and
' plainly for themſelves: which ſhews undeniably
' the want of a *Divine Revelation*, to recover Man-
' kind out of their univerſally degenerate Eſtate,
' into a State more ſuitable to the *Original* Excel-
' lency of their Nature: Both the Neceſſities of
' Men, and their *natural* Notions of God, gave
' them reaſonable ground therefore to expect a
' *Divine Revelation*: The ſame thing appears
' from the Acknowledgements made by the beſt
' and wiſeſt of the Heathen Philoſophers them-
' ſelves; and from their Expreſſions of the *Hopes*
' they had entertain'd, that God would ſome time
' or other vouchſafe *it* unto them. What then can
' be ſaid in Excuſe for the vain Arguings of cer-
' tain vitious and profane Men, who merely upon
' account of their Incredulity, would be thought to
' be *ſtrict Adherers to Reaſon*, and ſincere and dili-
' gent

'gent Enquirers into Truth; when indeed, on the 'contrary, there is but too much Cauſe to fear, 'that they are not at all *ſincerely* and really deſi- 'rous to be ſatisfy'd in the true State of things, 'but only ſeek, under the Pretence and Cover of 'Infidelity, to excuſe their Vices and Debauche- 'ries; which they are ſo ſtrongly enſlav'd to, that 'they cannot prevail with themſelves upon any ac- 'count to forſake them: and yet a rational ſub- 'mitting to ſuch Truths, as *juſt Evidence* and un- 'anſwerable Reaſon would induce them to be- 'lieve, muſt neceſſarily make them uneaſy under 'thoſe Vices, and ſelf-condemn'd in the Practice 'of them. Thus far Dr. *Clarke*, I told 'em, tho' 'dead, yet ſpeaketh; and let them ſhew, that He 'ſpeaks amiſs.

*A.* 'Tis certain, they will never be able to do it in this Matter. Happy had it been for Himſelf and others too, had his *Humility* been as conſpicuous in receiving the *myſterious* Truths of Chriſtianity, as his Knowledge was confeſſedly ſtrong and extenſive in defending the Chriſtian Religion in *general*; he had never then incurr'd the Cenſure of an *Engliſh Convocation*, nor yet been ſtruck out of the Liſt of Chaplains by his Royal Miſtreſs Queen *Ann*. Humility in Things Divine, is that ſhining Virtue, with which Mr. *Lock* will ever ſtand recorded. He ſaw Myſteries in Nature; and he ſaw Myſteries in Reveal'd Religion; He perceiv'd, upon Examination, as *clear Evidence* for *one* Fact, as for the *other*; and therefore his Reaſon taught Him to ſubmit to *both*; and made *Him rejoice* (as

He ſays Himſelf) *in Revelation, which had ſet Him at Reſt in many things.* The other Gentleman's Philoſophical Genius did not ſo well know how to ſubmit to *ſome* Limitations made to his Underſtanding; which put Him upon making thoſe Objections, which he has done, about the *Chriſtian Religion*'s having been *corrupted*, or not rightly underſtood. And did theſe Enquiries appear to have been *ſincerely* made, there had been ſome room to plead for Dr. *Clarke*'s not being ſatisfied (as Mr. *Lock* was) with that *uncorrupted* Chriſtianity, which has been convey'd to us for ſo many Ages. But alas! his want of *Sincerity* in his late *Enquiries* about theſe Matters, ſpoil'd all: and you will have *this* fully laid open to you, when I have next the Pleaſure of ſeeing You in this Place.

*B.* There is one Paragraph in his *Boyle*'s Lectures, that ſeems to favour him as to this Matter. 'Tis this: * He tells the *Deiſts*, 'that all the *Credenda* or *Doctrines*, which the true, ſimple and 'uncorrupted Chriſtian Religion teaches; (that is, 'not only thoſe plain Doctrines, which it requires 'to be believed as fundamental and of neceſſity to 'eternal Salvation, but even *all* the Doctrines 'which it teaches as *Matters of Truth*;) are, tho' 'indeed many of them not diſcoverable by bare 'Reaſon unaſſiſted with Revelation, yet, when 'diſcovered by *Revelation*, apparently moſt *agreeable* to ſound unprejudiced Reaſon; have *every* 'one *of them* a natural *tendency*, and a direct and pow-

* *Dr.* Clark's *Boyle*'s *Lectures*, p. 154. Ed. *7th.*

'powerful *Influence*, to reform Men's Lifes, and 'correct their Manners; and do *together* make up 'an infinitely more *conſiſtent and rational Scheme of* 'Belief, than any of the wiſeſt of the ancient Phi-'loſophers ever did, or the cunningeſt of modern 'Unbelievers can invent or contrive.

*A.* This Paragraph ſets Dr. *Clarke* in the following Light, if I miſtake not; and I deſire, He may be ſet in as *fair* a one, as his own Words will allow. He believ'd in ſeveral Doctrines of Chriſtianity that are not diſcoverable by *bare Reaſon* unaſſiſted with Revelation; He believed in *all* the Doctrines which the *true, ſimple and uncorrupted* Chriſtian Religion teaches; He believ'd that they had *all* a natural tendency, *&c.* and did *all together* make up a more rational Scheme of Belief, *&c.* But then peruſe His *Scripture Doctrine*; his Letters to Mr. *Nelſon* and Dr. *Wells*, &c. and tell me, whether that great *Myſtery* of the Holy and ever bleſſed *Trinity* is ranked or eſteemed of by Him, as one of thoſe Doctrines, which the *true, ſimple and uncorrupted* Chriſtian Religion teaches: Tell me, whether he has not willfully miſrepreſented the *ſacred Writings* in that reſpect; whether his Expoſitions, in his *Scripture Doctrine* and in his *Paraphraſes*, are not ſometimes manifeſtly different, if not contradictory; whether He has not notoriouſly arraign'd the Judgment of the Catholick Church in this matter; whether He has not knowingly perverted the Senſe and Meaning of the ancient *Fathers*; and whether He has not groſly abuſed his Mother Church of *England*, by wreſting her

*Liturgy* to ſerve his *Heretical* Purpoſes? I told yo when I laſt ſaw you, that I had many Years ago, in a publick manner, made good this heavy Charge againſt Him, concerning his *Inſincere* Dealings as to this Doctrine of the *Trinity*; and, according to my Promiſe, I ſhall make it farther appear, in a much ſtronger Light, when the next happy Meeting ſhall call for it. At preſent, let it be our Buſineſs to examine what our *Anti-Phl.* has to ſay for Himſelf in this *Defence* of His; whether He has *yet* made it probable, that Dr. *Clarke* could poſſibly be convinc'd of a *Miſtake*, in relation to *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, by ſuch Arguments as he had to lay before Him.

*B.* Before you enter upon ſuch an *Examination*, I ſhould think it proper to let Dr. *Clarke* Himſelf be heard in his own Words concerning *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony; as it ſtands in all the *ſeven* Editions; and by this means we ſhall form a better Judgment about his coming into our *Anti-Phl*'s Notions. Dr. *Clarke* had hitherto believ'd, that the Primitive Chriſtians, when they *Appeal'd* to *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, which he had taken from the *Roman Records*, were in their *right Senſes*; and that, as well thoſe, who expreſly mention *Phlegon*, as thoſe who intentionally meant the ſame thing, were all throughly convinc'd, that the *Date* of the Eclipſe correſponded with the *Time* of Chriſt's Paſſion: otherwiſe, who does not ſee, that they and their Religion too muſt have ſuffer'd; and inſtead of propagating Chriſtianity as they propos'd, muſt have render'd themſelves inevitably both odious

and

and ridiculous in the Eye of the Heathen part of the World? Now, if Dr. *Clarke* once conceiv'd thus of the Matter, (as will be better ſeen by producing the Paſſage itſelf) we are to enquire, how he came to change his Mind; How ſuch an *Agreement*, as there once was betwixt the *Gentile* and the *Chriſtian*, touching *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe and our Saviour's Crucifixion, comes *now* to be call'd in queſtion; and why *that Eclipſe*, which was once acknowledged by *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Chriſtians* to be *Preternatural*, ſhould *now*, in Dr. *Clarke*'s Opinion, paſs for a *Natural* one. If you pleaſe then, let Dr. *Clarke* ſpeak Himſelf; and then let our *Anti-phl.* clear up theſe Difficulties in his *Defence*.

*A.* I can have no Objection to your Method; and accordingly I obſerve, that the late Dr. *Sam. Clarke*, Rector of St. *James*'s *Weſtminſter*, in the *ſeventh* Edition of his *Boyle*'s Lectures, ‡ where He is ſaying (in oppoſition to the *Deiſts*) that many Particulars in the Hiſtory of Chriſt contain'd in the New Teſtament *are confirm'd by concurrent Teſtimonies of profane and unqueſtionably unprejudiced Authors*; expreſſes Himſelf as follows: 'The Cru-'cifixion of Chriſt under *Pontius Pilate* is related 'by *Tacitus*, thus:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Tiberio* Imperitante, per procuratorem *Pontium Pilatum* ſupplicio affectus erat. L. 15. | In the Reign of *Tiberius* Chriſt was put to Death by *Pontius Pilate* the Governour. |

'And

‡ p. 355.

‘ And diverſe of the moſt remarkable Circum-
‘ ſtances (ſays He) attending it, ſuch as the Earth-
‘ quake and *miraculous Darkneſs*, were recorded in
‘ the publick *Roman Regiſters*, commonly *Appeal'd*
‘ to by the firſt Chriſtian Writers, as what could
‘ not be *denied* by the Adverſaries themſelves. So
‘ *Tertullian*;

Eum Mundi Caſum relatum in *Arcanis veſtris* habetis. *Tertull. Apol.* †

This Wonder of the World you have related, and the Relation preſerv'd in your *Archives*.

‘ And theſe Circumſtances (ſays He) are in a very
‘ particular manner atteſted by *Phlegon*, as follow-
‘ eth;

Τετάρτῳ δ' ἔτει τῆς διακοσιοστῆς δευτέρας ὀλυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἔκλειψις ἡλίου μεγίστη τῶν ἐγνωρισμένων πρότερον. Καὶ Νὺξ ὥρᾳ ἕκτῃ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥστε καὶ ἀστέρας ἐν οὐρανῷ φανῆναι. Καὶ σεισμός, &c. *Phlegon* ap. Euſeb.

In the IVth Year of the CCIId Olympiad, there was the greateſt Eclipſe of the Sun that ever was known before: and Night came on at the ſixth Hour of the Day, inſomuch that the Stars appear'd in the Sky.

‘ And this Teſtimony of *Phlegon* is cited by *Ori-*
*gen* for the ſame Purpoſe, as followeth;

† Our *Anti-Phl.* (in his Def. p. 8.) does not allow this *Teſtimony* to be *Authentic*; but gives no *Reaſon*. *Query*, if He gave Dr. *Clarke* any?

Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐκλείψεως ὃν Βασιλεύοντος καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔοικεν ἐσταυρῶσθαι. Καὶ περὶ τῶν μεγάλων τότε γενομένων σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς, ἀνέγραψε καὶ Φλέγων. *Origen.* adv. Cell. Lib. 2. f.

But concerning the *Eclipſe* under *Tiberius Cæſar*, in whoſe Reign (we know) Chriſt was crucified; and concerning the great Earthquakes which then happen'd, *Phlegon* alſo has written.

Thus far Dr. *Clarke*; who was of an Opinion, we ſee, for *ſeven* Editions together of theſe *Lectures*, (levell'd directly againſt the *Deiſts*) that theſe Particulars in the *Goſpel Hiſtory* concerning the *Earthquake* and the *miraculous Darkneſs*, were *confirm'd* by the concurrent Teſtimonies of *profane and unqueſtionably unprejudiced Authors*. The Caſe then ſtands thus;

*Since Dr. Clarke's Death*, the Lecturer of his Pariſh Church, one Dr. *Sykes*, has thought proper to inform the World, that He Himſelf did convince the *Rector* of St. *James's* of a Miſtake concerning *Phlegon's* Teſtimony; by offering him ſuch *Reaſons* (now publiſhed and alſo defended) as firſt induc'd Himſelf and afterwards the Doctor, to think, that the *Eclipſe* mention'd by *Phlegon* had no relation to the *Darkneſs* at our Saviour's Paſſion. Accordingly, in the *eighth* Edition of theſe *Lectures*, thoſe Teſtimonies of *Phlegon*, and *Origen's* Appeal to it, are both ſtruck out; the Reader is advertis'd withal, that theſe and other *Alterations* in this *eighth Edition* are all truly printed from

from the Author's own Copy, that He left behind Him: and to prevent the *Deists* taking any Advantage from such *Alterations* as these made by Dr. *Sykes*; He himself has assur'd the World, that his own *Essays* and other Pieces by Him already published, are an undeniable Proof of his firm Attachment to *Reveal'd Religion*: but that still, in his Opinion, the alledging *such Testimonies* as these (from *Phlegon*, *Tert.* *Origen*, &c.) is so far from *adding* any Force to what is urged for the Truth of Christianity, that, on the contrary, 'tis rather doing a Disservice *to the Cause of Christ*; and that therefore He *guards* against such *Testimonies*. Thus our *Lecturer* has taken the *Chair*, and sits in Judgment upon ancient and modern Writers. *Phlegon* and *Origen* are already discarded, *i. e.* no more to be heard of in Mr. *Boyle*'s Lectures; as bearing their Testimony in the manner Dr. *Clarke* had produc'd 'em; and *Tertullian* in another Edition may possibly share the same Fate. The *Aversion* then of our *Anti-phl.* let it be never so strong, He must be contented to hear his *Praises* sung by our *Libertines*: when they see him plung'd so deep in their Service, and endeavouring *at least* to do a dirty Piece of Work for 'em, which neither they nor their Fore-Fathers were hardy enough to attempt the doing themselves. If Dr. *Clarke*, a Man of those fine Parts, great Learning, and solid Judgment (as the World generally represents him to have been) was induc'd to *submit* to such *Reasons* as our *Anti-phl.* has offer'd to the World; what is the Victory, (say the *Deists*) that we mayn't promise

promiſe to ourſelves in this reſpect? Nay, why may not Dr. *Clarke* (ſay they) have *doted* or elſe have been *prejudiced* in favour of *Reveal'd Religion*; ſince *Juſtin* M. and *Tertullian* (as our *Anti-Phl.* has told us) * were *good Men*; but had miſtaken the *Acts* of *Pilate*, and quoted them as *genuine*, juſt as they did *ſome other things*, which ſeem'd to make ſo ſtrongly *for their* Cauſe? "Now, tho' this be a falſe way of arguing in our *Deiſts*; yet I agree with you, many of your ſuperficial Sparks are ready enough to run away with it for ſound Reaſoning: whereas the Conſequence, 'tis manifeſt, is very faulty: for, when the *Deiſt* with his Senſes and Underſtanding about Him, comes to be argued with; what He requires of his Adverſary, is, that ſuch and ſuch *Premiſes* be laid down; be made plainly appear by the juſt Rules of Argument; and that the ſeveral *Deductions* from thoſe Principles be naturally made, and as evident as the Truth of the Premiſes themſelves. To object, *after* this is done, *Inſincerity* in *other Matters*, if it cannot be prov'd in *this*; is only ſhewing a great deal of weakneſs; juſt the ſame, as telling the World, that becauſe my Adverſary is known to be a *bad* Man in ſeveral things, He muſt not be allow'd to *argue well* or juſtly in any thing.

*B.* After the Caſe thus ſtated, and the Remark you have made; let me ask you freely, what it is, that you take to be the great *Difficulty*, which our *Anti-Phl.* throws in the way of every ſober Reader,

* P. 39.

der, concerning this *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon*; and whether ſuch *Difficulty* can be ſuppoſed ſufficient to have influenc'd Dr. *Clarke* ſo far, as to ſtrike out of his *Lectures* what had been ſaid by *unqueſtionably unprejudic'd Authors*, (as He calls 'em) and *what cou'd not be deny'd* (He ſays) *by the Adverſaries themſelves*. To ſuppoſe Dr. *Clarke*, after ſuch Expreſſions as theſe, to give Ear to an old blind Hypotheſis of *Kepler*'s (which Mr. *Wh.* has enough expoſed already) or indeed, to hearken to any Argument whatever, drawn from *Eclipſes*, to prove *that natural*, which Friends and Foes have in all Ages (Dr. *Clarke* was very ſure) agreed to be *ſupernatural*; is to ſuppoſe, that Dr. *Clarke* paid a greater deference to the *Ipſe Dixit* of his *Lecturer*, than to the concurrent Teſtimony of all Antiquity.

*A.* The great *Difficulty*, as I take it, that our *Anti-Phl.* ſtarts, in this Affair of *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, is what I took ſome Notice of, when I laſt ſaw you; and it may perhaps (ſince our *Anti-Phl.* in his *Defence* ſeems to caſt a greater Miſt than before) now want to be farther explain'd. The Difficulty then ariſes from *different Epocha*'s, or from the Way and Manner of adjuſting *Time*, both before and after this Eclipſe of *Phlegon*'s. If you turn to the 39th page of his *Defence*, you find Him, after He has triumph'd for about two or three Pages, on account of theſe ſeeming *Difficulties* in *Chronology*; (which he conceals from his Reader) arguing thus: 'When I produced *Jerome*'s Autho-'rity, ſays He, to prove, that *Africanus* thought

'that

' that Chriſt died in the XVth of *Tiberius*; unleſs
' there were ſome clear Evidence, that *Jerome*
' miſtook or miſrepreſented Him, it ought to be
' admitted ſufficient to prove, that *Africanus*
' thought *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe to have happen'd ſome
' time in the IVth Year of the 201ſt or in the 1ſt
' Year of the 202d Olympiad. But my Argument
' went farther: For, I ſhewed that *Origen* was in
' the ſame Opinion, or varied but little from it;
' and ſo was *Tertullian* and *Lactantius* and *Clemens*
' *Alexandrinus*; and, in general, this was the cur-
' rent Notion of all the Primitive Chriſtians, or
' all but one. It follows therefore, that *Origen*
' and all the Primitive Chriſtians, as well as *Afri-*
' *canus*, muſt conceive *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe to have
' happen'd in that Year (the XVth of *Tiberius*)
' ſince they thought that Chriſt died in that Year:
' And ſince it appears, that in Fact there was ſuch
' an Eclipſe in that Year, (the XVth of *Tiberius*)
' their *Teſtimonies* are ſo many Evidences, that
' *Phlegon* ſpoke of an Eclipſe in *that* Year, and
' not of a Darkneſs that happen'd *three* Years af-
' ter." Here our *Anti-phl.* thinks Himſelf ſecure of his Point; whereas he is groſly miſtaken through the whole Paragraph. It is readily granted, if He pleaſes, that *Jerome* did not miſrepreſent *Africanus* in ſaying that Chriſt died in the XVth of *Tiberius*: but then, the Conſequence that he draws from it, is utterly denied, when He ſays, that therefore *it ought to be admitted ſufficient to prove that* Africanus *thought* Phlegon's *Eclipſe to have happen'd ſome time in the IVth Year of the* 201ſt *or in*

*the 1ſt Year of the 202d Olympiad*; for if *Africanus*'s Supputation of Years be rightly conſider'd, he could not poſſibly think any ſuch thing: for, as he computed from the beginning of the *Imperial* Power of *Tiberius*; and it being well known, that there were two *Epocha*'s then obſerv'd in the *Roman* Empire; *viz.* the *Proconſular* and the *Imperial* Power of *Tiberius*; 'tis plain, that the XVth and the XVIIIth of *Tiberius* are really one and the *ſame Year*, correſponding with the 3d or 4th of the 202d *Olympiad*; ſo that *Africanus* could not *think*, as our *Anti-Phl.* would have it admitted, that *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe happened ſometime in the 4th Year of the 201ſt or in the 1ſt Year of the 202d Olympiad; becauſe he could not then have *thought* conſiſtently with his own *Supputation*: for his XVth (as I ſhall ſhew more fully by and by) agrees with St. *Luke*'s XVIIIth of *Tiberius*; and conſequently, by our *Anti-phl*'s *own way* of arguing in this Paragraph, *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe was not a *natural* one. How Romantick then are the *Remarks* that He makes, after He has done with the ſeveral *Calculations*, that were given Him of a *Natural* Eclipſe in *November A. D.* 29? † 'It appears by Calcula-'tion, ſays He, (*and who diſputes it?*) that the 'Total Eclipſe in the *firſt* Year of the 202d O-'lympiad was at its heighth within a few Minutes 'after 12 at Noon, *&c.* But does this prove, that *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe happen'd in the 1ſt Year of the 202d Olympiad? I am perſuaded, that the ableſt

† Def. p. 64, 65,

ableſt *Mathematician* that He has conſulted (whom all the World mentions with the greateſt Honour) will never tell him ſo. *Africanus* flouriſh'd, not 100 Years after *Phlegon* Himſelf. *Africanus* (our *Anti-Phl.* cannot deny) has apply'd *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe (to ſay nothing of the *Full Moon* at preſent) in the ſtrongeſt Terms to the Paſſion of Chriſt. Now then, whatever was the *Year* of Chriſt's Paſſion, according to *Africanus*'s Supputation, whether the XVth or the XVIIIth of *Tiberius*, 'tis plain, the *Date* of *Phlegon*'s Olympiad muſt agree with it; otherways, it would not have been *appeal'd* to: and if the *Date* of the Olympiad does agree with thoſe Supputations of the XVth and XVIIIth of *Tiberius*, 'tis demonſtrable, that the *Darkneſs* mention'd by *Phlegon*, and *that* by the Evangeliſts, muſt be *one* and the ſame. 'Tis ridiculous to imagine, if there had not been ſuch an Agreement in theſe Supputations, or if *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe had been a *Natural* one, that *Africanus* would ever have ſaid, as he does, * *'Tis plain*, ſays He, that *Phlegon ſpeaks of this univerſal prodigy*. † I ſhall ſay no more of *Africanus* now: for I intend to take an Opportunity, before we part, to juſtify the *Reading* of *Africanus*, in *Syncellus*, as well againſt Mr. *Wh*--'s imaginary *Interpolations*, as the Charge of *Inaccuracy* in *Syncellus*.



* Δῆλον ὡς ἑαυτην,

† Τὸ Κόσμικον Τέρας ἡλίου ἔκλειψις.

*B.* I remember, you open'd this Affair to me of *different Supputations*, at our laſt Meeting, and it gave me a good deal of Satisfaction; but I ſhould now be further oblig'd to you, if you would enter deeper into it: for I plainly perceive by the *Defence* that our *Anti-phl.* has made, that He endeavours to intrench Himſelf as ſtrong as poſſible by the help of theſe *Chronological Difficulties*. He knew, that if *theſe* could not be ſolv'd, the *Libertines* would have ſome reaſon to rejoice; and yet methinks, how ſtupid muſt their Mirth be, when, according to this way of arguing, which their *Anti-phl.* teaches 'em, they are to make *Origen*, in his own native *Greek*, and ſeveral others, *appealing* to a mere *Natural* Eclipſe; the *one*, in his Diſpute with *Celſus*; and the *others* in their ſeveral Defences made in behalf of Chriſtianity? Such is the refuge, ſuch are the miſerable ſhifts, I find, that our *Anti-phl.* is forc'd to have recourſe to at laſt!

*A.* I will, then, ſince you require it, ſearch farther into this Affair, concerning the *different Supputation* of Years amongſt the *Antients*, relating to Chriſt's Paſſion: and I will firſt ſtate the Matter in the very ſame Words, as our *Anti-phl.* has ſtated it in his *firſt performance* on this Subject. ‡ 'Tho' 'Africanus (ſays He) has not nam'd the *Year*, 'yet by his Application of the Eclipſe of *Phlegon* 'to the *Death* of Chriſt, 'tis plain, He ſuppoſed 'it to be the *ſame* Year. If therefore *it can be* '*found out*, what Year was the univerſally allow'd *Year*,

‡ Diſſert. p. 15, 16.

*Year*, amongſt the Antients, of our Saviour's
' Death, and what was *Africanus*'s Notion in par-
' ticular, *That* muſt be the *Year*, in which *Phlegon*'s
' Eclipſe happened. You may remember, when I laſt talk'd with you upon this Subject, I often quoted the celebrated P. *Pagi*, whom, I think, our *Anti-phl.* has *once* nam'd in his *Defence*, and taken no farther Notice of Him: whereas, no body perhaps has been more ſucceſsful in removing ſuch *Difficulties*, as our *Anti-phl.* raiſes, than the very fame P. *Pagi*. Firſt of all then, this learned Man obſerves; * That it does not ſo clearly appear, whether St. *Luke*, when He mentions the *Year* of Chriſt's Baptiſm is to be underſtood of the XVth of the *Proconſular*, or the XIVth of the *Imperial* Power of *Tiberius*; and, therefore, as to the exact *Time* of Chriſt's *Birth*, every one is left to be of that Opinion, which He judges moſt probable. I have ſhewn (ſays He) how, or upon what foot, it may be maintain'd, that Chriſt was *born* in the Year of *Rome* 748; baptiz'd in the 26*th* of the Chriſtian *Æra*, and *crucified* in the 29*th* Year of the ſame. But if any one ſhall be diſpoſed to object, in ſaying, it contradicts the *Aſtronomical* Tables, that Chriſt ſhould be ſaid to ſuffer upon the 25*th* of *March* of the *Dionyſian* Year 29; that's an *Opinion* which I can eaſily come into: for according to *that*, Chriſt was baptiz'd in the 26*th* of the Vulgar *Æra*, when it was the XVth Year cur-

* P. Ant. *Pagi* Apparatus Chronolog. ad Annales *Baronij*, p. 39. Ed. Par. 1689.

current of the *Proconſular* Power of *Tiberius*; *John* the Baptiſt exerciſed his Miniſtry for four Years; and after that, Chriſt, having kept four *Paſſovers*, was crucified for us upon the third Day of *April*, in the 33d Year of the Chriſtian *Æra*: and I am very much inclin'd to believe (ſays P. *Pagi*) that St. *Luke* is * to be underſtood of the XVth Year of the *proconſular* Power of *Tiberius*. However, as to the *Year* of Chriſt's Paſſion, I don't take upon me to determine myſelf; but only to *explain* the general Senſe or Opinion of the *Ancients* upon it.

*B.* I remember you did give me ſome of thoſe *Explications* of *Pagi*; but pray go on, and let me hear *more*: and ſhould you repeat ſometimes any thing *already* ſaid, I ſhall think it time well ſpent, now that we are ſo cloſely engag'd in an Affair, that I hope will be clear'd up by this ſagacious Wri-

* The Original in St. *Luke* (Cap. 3. 1.) ſeems, I think, to favour P. *Pagi*'s Judgment about the *Proconſular* Power of *Tiberius*; the *ſame Word* is us'd to expreſs *Tiberius*'s Government as *that* of *Pontius Pilate*; not Τῆς ἀρχῆς, but Τῆς ἡγεμονίας Τιβερίου Καίσαρος; ſo ἡγεμονεύοντος Ποντίου Πιλάτου. Nor is the Word *Cæſar* any Objection: for 'tis certain, whenever there appear'd to be *Collegues* or Copartners in the Empire, they always ſhar'd alike, in taking the Name of *Emperor*. *Comperi autem* (inquit *Pagi*, in Crit. Hiſtor. Chronol. p. 7. Ed Par.) *Titum a Veſpaſiano, Trajanum a Nerva, Antoninum ab Adriano, & Marcum Aurelium ab eodem Antonino in Societatem Imperij adſcitos fuiſſe, & Imperatoris prænomen non minùs quàm ipſos Auguſtos tuliſſe. Concluſi, id Auguſti Exemplo factum fuiſſe, minimeq; dubitandum, quin Tiberius vere Collega Imperij fuerit, annique ejus ab ea Epocha aliquando deducti.*

Writer ſo far, that even our *Anti-Phleg. may find out* (as He ſays) *what Year was the univerſally allowed Year, amongſt the Ancients, of our Saviour's Death*; and *then* we have him confeſſing, that THAT *muſt be the Year, in which* Phlegon's *Eclipſe happened.*

*A.* P. *Pagi* ſays expreſly, that the *ancient* Fathers of the Chriſtian Church laid it down, as a thing certain, not only that *Tiberius* was a *Colleague* in the Empire, but that the *Years* of his Reign were computed from the Time that he was inveſted with that Dignity; † I remember, I told you, when we laſt talk'd upon this Subject, that *Euſebius* was one of the firſt that broke the Ice, in changing the ancient way of *ſupputing* the Death of our Lord. I rather chuſe to refer you to your Commonplace-Book, than to ſpend Time in repeating what was then ſaid upon that Matter. I now go on in obſerving from P. *Pagi*, ‖ as follows; As to the *Month* and the *Day*, ſays He, wherein Chriſt was crucify'd; it was held by Chriſtians, for the *three* firſt Centuries, that it was upon the 25*th* of *March*, as appears from ſeveral *Martyrologies* taken notice of by *Henſchene* and *Papebroche*; and This Opinion of Chriſt's ſuffering in the Month of *March*, prevail'd even to the XIIIth Century; when *Roger Bacon* an Engliſhman, of the *Franciſcan* Order;



† Ab ea Dignitate, (*viz.* Proconſulari) Annos ejus numeratos pro certo poſuerunt *Antiqui* Eccleſiæ Patres, ut de Baptiſmo Chriſti loquentes oſtendemus. Crit. Hiſt. Chron. p. 7.

‖ Ib. p. 25, 26.

con-temporary with *Bonaventure*, and well skill'd in the *Mathematicks*, took a *new* Method, by his *Calculations*; affirming, that Chriſt ſuffered upon the *third* Day of *April*: and from that time the *old Tradition* was laid aſide.

*B.* Notwithſtanding it was our Countryman that had the Honour of making this Change; there ſeems to be one great Difficulty in ſuch an Attempt: Several of the Ancients, I find, ſupport their Opinion, in ſaying, that Chriſt ſuffer'd on the *25th* of *March* A. D. 29; becauſe, ſay they, the two *Gemini* were *Conſuls that* Year. Now, ſuch a material *Circumſtance* as this, being aſſign'd; it may be ask'd, how the *old Opinion* came to be laid aſide?

*A.* The Queſtion is by no means improper; and P. *Pagi* diſcourſes upon it thus. Firſt, the Knowledge of *profane Hiſtory*, He ſays, is very neceſſary for diſcovering the *Year* of our Lord's Paſſion; The *old Opinion* therefore was laid aſide, by neglecting or not attending carefully to ſuch ſort of Hiſtory; as alſo by laying too much Streſs upon *Aſtronomical Calculations*. St. *Auſtin*, He ſays, ſeems to inform us, as to the firſt, in the following Words, † 'Many of our *Reſearches* are made by 'the help of the *Olympiads*, and by the Names of 'the Conſuls; and the being ignorant of the *Con-'ſulſhip*, when our Lord was born and when He 'ſuffer'd, has led ſome People into a Miſtake. A little after this, St. *Auſtin* ſays alſo; 'By comparing 'the

† De Doctr. Chriſt. L. 2. C. 28.

'the *Goſpel* with *prophane Hiſtory* in this Matter;
'a much better Judgment may be form'd, as to
'the Number of *Years* that Chriſt liv'd upon Earth.
Therefore, ſays *Pagi*, there ſeems to have been a double *Error* committed in this Matter; and which occaſion'd the altering and removing the Year of our Lord's Paſſion from the Year XXIX of the Vulgar *Æra*. The firſt *Error*, (ſays He) was, in the way of explaining the *Year* of *Phlegon*'s Olympiad. As to this, I muſt refer you to what paſs'd in our laſt Conference, where I took notice from this Author, that there had been *two* ways of computing the *Olympiads* anciently obſerv'd; and particularly ſo by *Africanus*; and that both *Kepler* and *Petavius*, not attending to this, they ſtarted Difficulties from *Euſebius*'s *Chronicon*, where there really were none: for the Fault, ſays *Pagi*, does not lie in the *Year* (as they imagin'd) but in the *Olympiad*, &c. The other *Error*, that *Pagi* aſſigns, was the ignorance of *ſome*, as to the way of computing from the commencement of the *proconſular authority of* Tiberius; which was a ſort of Ignorance that gradually got footing; and the Minds of Men were by degrees ſo much in the dark about *proconſular* Authority, that even in this learned Age it was call'd in queſtion: for it being plain from St. *Luke*'s Goſpel, that Chriſt was baptiz'd in the XVth of *Tiberius*; *that Year*, in proceſs of Time, was underſtood to be the XVth of his *Imperial Authority* or his Auguſtean Empire. So *Proſper* in his Chronicle, as publiſh'd by *Phil. Labbe* in his *Bibliotheque*; 'Some imagine, ſays He,

'that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was crucified in the 'XVth of *Tiberius*, *i. e.* when the two *Gemini* 'were Conſuls; whereas 'tis evident, upon the 'undoubted Authority of *Luke* the Evangeliſt, 'that Chriſt was baptiz'd that very Year, and be-'gan to preach the Goſpel of the Kingdom of 'Heaven." P. *Pagi*'s Remark here is this; But the *Ancients*, ſays He, had told the World otherwiſe; their Opinion having been, that St. *Luke* is to be underſtood of the XVth Year of the *Proconſular*, and not of the XVth of the *Imperial* Authority of *Tiberius*; nor was the *Credit* of thoſe *Ancients* to be ſo eaſily diſputed.

*B.* I deſire now, if you pleaſe, to have ſome Account of the *Error*, that (in P. *Pagi*'s Judgment) thoſe fell into, (relating to the *Year* of our Lord's Paſſion) who laid too great a Streſs upon their *Aſtronomical* Calculations, in that Affair.

*A.* P. *Pagi*'s Opinion is, that the *Teſtimony* from Antiquity, and not *Aſtronomy*, is the ſureſt Guide for finding out the *Year* of Chriſt's Paſſion. However ſome learned Men, He ſays, being accurately vers'd in that Science, have ventur'd to aſſign *another Year* for Chriſt's Paſſion, than what the *Ancients*, who liv'd next the Age of our Saviour, have delivered down to us. I ſhall ſpend too much of our Time, (I fear) if I give you the whole of what He ſays upon this Head, and therefore muſt refer you † to the Author Himſelf, to be read at your Leiſure,

† P. *Pagi* Crit. Hiſt. Chron. in Annales Baronij p. 26. Ed. Par.

Leiſure. Thus much I obſerve however: Amongſt theſe learned Men, He again names our *Roger Bacon*, as aſſerting, from his *Aſtronomical* Calculations, that Chriſt died the *third* of *April* in the Year XXXIII of the Vulgar *Æra*. In the next Century *Paulus Burgenſis* taught the very ſame Doctrine; having made a *Lunar* Calculation; as He affirms Himſelf in his 26*th* Chapter upon *Matthew*. Some Years afterwards, *Toſtatus* reaſſumed the Debate, and, in his Diſputations held in *Tuſcany*, one of his *Theſis*'s was this, *viz.* 'that Chriſt 'did not die upon the 25*th* of *March*, but upon 'the *third* of *April*; and *that* too in his XXXIIId 'Year current, but not compleat. *Toſtatus* writ an *Apology* in Defence of his *Theſis*, alledging, that this Queſtion in his time had been debated and determined, as he had done it, in the Courts of *two Popes*; both *Aſtronomers* and *Jews* being called into the Debate. 'Tis no wonder, ſays *Pagi*, that this Opinion *afterwards* prevail'd; for they that talk'd or writ about the *Year* and *Day* of Chriſt's Paſſion, commonly took all they had to ſay or write, from P. *Burgenſis* and *Toſtatus*. This is atteſted by *Petavius*; 'All ‡ the Diſputations 'and Commentaries of ſuch as were vers'd in this 'Controverſy, were deriv'd, as from a Fountain, 'from the Writings of *thoſe* two Men. But in one thing *Petavius* is much miſtaken, ‖ when He believes, that the *Ancients* did not know ſo well, how to account for the Motions of the *Sun* and *Moon*; and that

‡ De Doctr. Temp. Lib. 12. Cap. 15.
‖ Cap. 13.

that therefore, having rather a regard, in their *Calculations*, to the *Days* of the *Week*, than to the *Age* of the *Moon*; did accordingly fix the Paſſion of Chriſt to the *Julian* Year 74, or the 29*th* of the Vulgar *Æra*; becauſe they found, that in *that* Year *only* the 25*th* of *March* and *Friday* did *coincide*: For, (ſays *Pagi*) conſidering the many Controverſies had concerning *Eaſter*; ſo many National Diſputes about it; ſuch ſevere Diſſentions between the Eaſtern and Weſtern Parts of the World upon that Subject; ſo many *Synods* held all the World over; the *Decree* of the great Council of *Nice* in particular, receiving the Approbation of ſubſequent Councils concerning that Matter; laſtly, the many *Paſchal Cycles* contriv'd, to adjuſt the various Courſes of Sun and Moon: Theſe are all Arguments ſufficient to prove, that *they* were not wanting in the Knowledge of *Aſtronomy*, in the firſt Ages of the Church; but yet, were firmly perſuaded, that this Queſtion was not to be decided by *Aſtronomical* Calculations, but rather from the *Teſtimony* of the Ancients deliver'd down in an unqueſtionable manner. Thus you have P. *Pagi*'s Judgment in this Matter; which he gives with a great deal of Modeſty, and leaves it to be farther examin'd by the learned World. After this, He proceeds to conſider a miſtaken Notion of the Great and learned *Gerhard Voſſius*, who had juſt then publiſh'd a *Diſſertation*, wherein He aſſerts, 'that Chriſt was born in the *Julian* Year 43, 'and that He was crucified the 25*th* of *March* in 'XXIXth of the Chriſtian *Æra*, and in the XVth

of

of *Tiberius*, after He had kept *two Paſſovers*; 'according to the Opinion (ſays He) of the *anci*-'*ent Doctors*. *Pagi* agrees with *Voſſius*, that the ancient *Fathers* did aſſign to Chriſt the holding of *two* Paſſovers; but then denies, what the other had advanc'd, *viz.* that thoſe *Fathers* underſtood St. *Luke* concerning the *Auguſtean Year* of *Tiberius*: for thoſe *Fathers*, ſays *Pagi*, grounded their Opinion quite otherwiſe, *viz.* upon the *proconſular* way of ſupputing the *Years* of *Tiberius*; and that *they* did accordingly ſo underſtand St. *Luke*. And to put that Matter quite out of diſpute, *Pagi* produces a very remarkable Paſſage from *Tertullian*, * where that *Father* ſays, 'Chriſt was Baptiz'd in the *twelfth* Year of '*Tiberius*; and a little after; that he was Bap-'tiz'd in the *fifteenth* Year of *Tiberius*. There is no Miſtake: they are different *Supputations*, and both true; which makes *Pagi* remark in theſe Words: † *Tertullian* diſtinguiſh'd thus on purpoſe, in uſing both the *Epocha*'s belonging to *Tiberius*'s Reign, that ſo the *Time* of Chriſt's Baptiſm might ſtill appear plainer.

*B.* I thank you, Sir for theſe agreeable Obſervations from that learned Man. But could our *Anti*-

* Lib. 1. contra Marcionem, Cap. 15.

† Ut ſecundum utramq; Tiberij *Epocham*, Annum Baptiſmi Chriſti magis manifeſtaret *Tertullianus*. ib. p. 27.

*Anti-Phle.* read all this and not think it proper to acquaint his Reader with one tittle of it; eſpecially, where He talks ſo much about the *Time* of Chriſt's ſuffering? Was the XVth and the XVIIIth of *Tiberius* realy the *ſame* Year (tho' according to different Supputations) and was *this* to be conceal'd, that He might the better amuſe the World, and deſtroy a *Heathen Teſtimony* of ſuch Importance? I now eaſily perceive, *how* He comes to make the Teſtimonies of *Africanus*, *Tertullian*, *Origin*, *Lactantius*, and all the Primitive Chriſtians to be of *his ſide* of the Queſtion; and when he tells us, that they are as *ſo many Evidences*, that *Phlegon* ſpoke only of a *Natural* Eclipſe.

*A.* After what you have heard, pleaſe now to conſider the State of the Queſtion, as I have already put it in our *Anti-phlegoniſt*'s own Words. 'If 'it can be *found out*, ſays He, ‖ *what year* was the 'univerſally allowed year, amongſt the Antients, 'of our *Saviour's Death*, and what was *Africanus*'s 'notion in particular; *That* muſt be the *year* in 'which *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe happened.' We have joyn'd *Iſſue*, you ſee, upon this; and how does the matter come out at laſt? Can any thing be plainer, than that there was ſuch a *different Supputation* of years amongſt the *Antients*, as we have now been talking of? Is it not ſelf-evident therefore, that the XVth and XVIIIth of *Tiberius* mean *one* and the *ſame* year, wherein *Chriſt Dyed*? The *univerſally allowed Year* then of Chriſt's Death is certainly *found*

‖ Differt. P. 16.

*found out*; and our *Anti-phl.* muſt know, that it had been long ſo. *Africanus*'s notion was pretty well conſidered, when I laſt ſaw you, concerning *Chriſt*'s *Death:* ſo that we have now a right to conclude in the very words of our *Anti-phlegoniſt* viz. The *Year* of Chriſt's Death being *found out*; *That* muſt be the very *year*, in which *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe happened.

*B.* I could be glad, methinks, to hear ſomething more of this *Africanus*'s *notion* about *Chriſt*'s *Death*; I am apt to think, there is ſomething abſtruſe and intricate in it; which makes our *Anti-phl.* lay ſo much ſtreſs upon it.

*A.* I believe, if you pleaſe to recollect all that paſſed upon that Subject, when we were laſt together; you will not want much more to be ſaid, for giving you full ſatisfaction. But if more ſhould be found neceſſary, I muſt refer you to a *Diſſertation* written by the ſame learned Hand, that I have already been making uſe of, called *Periodus Græco-Romana*; where you will ſee abundance of uſefull Learning, and a ſolid Judgment in the management of it. There are ſome few *Excerpta* which I formerly made from *it*, now lying before me. if they may be of any further ſervice to you, I will read them now: and they are, as follow. P. *Pagi* in that Diſſertation introduces *Petavius* confeſſing, that an enquiry into *Africanus*'s opinion about theſe matters, would be of great ſervice towards a right underſtanding of the *Greek Æra's*: but, that *Africanus*'s opinion was *obſcure*, ſays *Petavius*. *Pagi* thereupon obſerves thus: If we could

penetrate as eaſily into the ſenſe or opinion of other *Greek* Writers, as we may into *that* of *Africanus*; we ſhould not be ſo often in the dark, in reading them, as we are. There are two things therefore, ſays *Pagi*, which eſcaped *Petavius*, and which are to be laid down as certain Truths: The *one* is, that *Africanus*, as alſo many more amongſt the *Antients*, who lived in the *four* firſt Centuries, did compute the XVth of *Tiberius*, not from the Death of *Auguſtus* Cæſar; but from the *Time* that his *Proconſular* Power and Authority did commence, agreeing with the XI. or XII. of the *Dionyſian* Æra. The *other* is, that *Africanus* had a way of computing the *Olympiads* peculiar to Himſelf, viz: *two* years before the commonly received opinion: and yet to make Himſelf more clearly underſtood, *Africanus* ſometimes uſes the common *Supputation*; and at other times, when He is minded to fix any certain Point, He makes uſe of and applys *both* of them. According to *Africanus*'s Notion, (ſays *Pagi*) Chriſt was baptized in the year of the World 5529; of his Incarnation 29; of the *Dionyſian* Æra 26; when the XVth year of the *Proconſular* Power of *Tiberius* was then currant till the 28th Day of *September*. In the Fragment recorded by *Syncellus*, the *common* Supputation uſed in the *Olympiads* is there made uſe of, ſays *Pagi*; and therefore, as to Chriſt's *Paſſion*, *Africanus*'s *notion* there appears to be, that Chriſt Suffered in the 4th year of the 201 Olympiad, coinciding with the 29th year of the *Vulgar Æra*. This added to what has been ſaid already, will be ſufficient, I hope, to guard

you

you againſt the attempts of any *Libertine*, in their oppoſition to this *notion* of *Africanus*. And now upon the whole, reflect a little with your ſelf, and you muſt ſoon ſee the *Fallacious* Argument that our *Anti-phl.* has ſo artfully purſued both in his *Diſſertation* and his *Defence*. Will He ſay, that there was a *Natural* Eclipſe of the Sun in the XVth of *Tiberius*, according to the *Auguſtean* Supputation, which commenced from the Death of *Auguſtus?* It is eaſily granted Him. Will He ſay, that *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe happened likewiſe in this XVth of *Tiberius*, according to the ſame *Epocha?* 'Tis utterly denyed. For *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe happened *three* years afterwards; which, by the *Proconſular* Supputation, was the XVIIIth of *Tiberius*; And in this *year*, *Africanus* and the reſt of the Primitive Chriſtians, did conceive *Phlegons*'s Eclipſe to have happen'd; tho, by uſing another *Epocha*, they did as truly ſay, that *it* happened in the XVth of *Tiberius*; and when they made their *Appeal* to the *Roman Records*, whence *Phlegon* had the Account of this *miraculous Darkneſs*; they were unqueſtionably equally underſtood, whether they made uſe of one *Epocha* or the other: *both* being ſo well Known in the Roman Empire; tho' tis very reaſonable to ſuppoſe, when they were *Appealing* in a matter of ſuch Importance, they took eſpecial care, to uſe the ſame *Epocha*, as was made uſe of in the *Record* it ſelf. I well remember how I argued with you as to this matter from P. *Pagi* the laſt time I ſaw you here; and I can't forbear taking notice of it again. P. *Pagi* ſpeaking of the

*Eclipſe* at Chriſt's Paſſion, † § ſays thus; 'Ter-
'tullian, Origen, Julius Africanus, Auſtin and
'Jerome, who 'tis certain, were of an opinion that
'Chriſt ſuffered when the two *Gemini* were Conſuls;
'they inculcate and inſiſt upon *that* wonderfull Eclipſe
'by uſing the Authority of *Phlegon*; which plainly
'ſhews, ſays He, that they fix'd the very ſame
'year for our Lord's Paſſion, as Phlegon (from
'the Records) had done for his Eclipſe: For, if
'they had aſſign'd *another* year for the *Paſſion*,
'than what *Phlegon* had done for the *Eclipſe*;
'their endeavours had not only been fruſtrated,
'in making Converts to Chriſtianity from ſuch a
'*miraculous* Death; but they had moreover ſoon
'become the Jeſt and Scorn of the Gentile World.

*B.* As to *ſo many* of the *Antients* quoting *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe and applying it to our Saviour's Paſſion; our *Anti-phl.* ſeems to think Himſelf very ſafe, in putting the following Queſtion; *a* 'What reaſon can be given, ſays He, why ſe-
'veral of *theſe* are cited as *original Teſtimonies*, to the

† Tertullianus, Origenes, Iulius Africanus, Auguſtinus et Hieronymus, quos certum eſt Chriſtum duobus *Geminis* Conſulibus paſſum exiſtimaſſe, eam Eclipſim, *Phlegontis* auctoritate, ſuadent; Argumento manifeſto, eos *Paſſionem* eo anno conſignaſſe, quo *Phlegon* illud Solis Deliquium. Si enim Paſſionem altero, quam *Phlegon* Eclipſim collocaſſent anno; non mortem Chriſti miraculoſam, quod intendebant, Gentilibus perſuaſiſſent, ſed ſeipſos ludibrio expoſuiſſent. *Crit. Hiſt. &c.*

§ Crit. Hiſt. Chron. in Annal, Bar. P. 27.

*a* Def. P. 6.

' the Darkneſs at the Paſſion, and to *Phlegon's*
' Authority, which will not *equally* prove every
' *modern* Writer that has cited *Phlegon*, or has
' mention'd the Darkneſs at the Paſſion, to be
' an *original Teſtimony*? Mr. Wh. might as well
' have deſcended much lower, and have quoted
' *Voſſius*'s Harmony, and *Scaliger*, and *Petavius*,
' and Bp *Mountague*, and *Huetius* and *Grotius*, and
' *Baſnage*, and *Tillemont*, and *Pagi*, and *Bayle*,
' and all the Defenders of Chriſtianity down to
' the preſent Generation; and He might have gi-
' ven them all the name of *Original Evidences*; *as*
' *well* as he has given this Name to ſo many
' Writers; who lived ſo many Centuries after the
' Fact.

*A.* And can you think, this Queſtion or Objection deſerves a ſerious Anſwer? Who are theſe men, whoſe *original Teſtimonies* are thus traduced by our *Anti-phl.*? Are they not *Africanus*, *Origen*, *Euſebius*, *Maximus*, *Ierome*, the *Chronicon*, *Alexandrinum*, *Philoponus* and *Malela*? Did all theſe cite *Phlegon*; and is the name of *Original Evidences* no more due to them, than to the *modern* Writers, that He takes notice of? Were not the *Works* of *Phlegon* extant for about *eight Hundred* years, to be perus'd and copy'd by ALL theſe ancient Writers? Did not *Photius* make extracts out of ſeveral Books of *Phlegon*, *b* even in the *ninth* Cen-

*b* The learned *Pagi* was once under a *miſtake* about the continuance of theſe *Works* of *Phlegon*; but his modeſty and love

Century? And ſhall all the *ſeveral Extracts*, made likewiſe by theſe other antient Writers from *Phlegon's* Works, be call'd *mere Tranſcripts from one another, or the mere Copyings of later Writers out of preceding ones*, as our *Anti-phl.* is pleaſed to expreſs Himſelf. p. 7.? 'An *Authentick Writing*, He ſays, 'ſignifies either an *Original*, or elſe ſo faithfull 'and exact and ſo well atteſted a *Tranſcript*, that 'you cannot juſtly diſpute it's faithfullneſs. Does He not, in this very Explication of an *Authentic Writing*, fully confute Himſelf in the preſent Debate? He will not deny, but that *Phlegon*, by favour of his maſter *Adrian*, had free acceſs to the *Roman Records*; He will not call in queſtion *Phlegon's* veracity and fidelity in tranſcribing from thoſe *Records*; nor can He diſpute the faithfullneſs of thoſe *Ancients*, who for about *eight* Hundred years together have copyed; ſome *one* particular, ſome *another*, from the very *Works* of *Phlegon* Himſelf, concerning this wonderfull Eclipſe.

*B.*

love of truth ſoon made Him correct it. *Olympicorum et chronicorum Collectio* edita à *Phlegonte* Tralliano ad huc extabat *nono* Eccleſiæ ſeculo, quo *Photius* in ſua Bibliotheca (Cod. XCVII) ſe quinque *Illius* Libros legiſſe aſſerit; ex qua et aliqua decerpſit. Quare *eam* videre potuit *Philoponus*, qui longè ante *Photium* vixit. vid. P. *Pagi* inter *Corrigenda*, Seculo primo P. 302, et confer (inter *Crit. Hiſt, Chron.*) P. 27- 28. ed. Par.

*B.* Tis true, this very Explication of an *Authentic Writing*, conſidering that *Phlegon*'s Works were ſo *long extant*, is an ugly Argument formed againſt Himſelf; and I am apt to think, ſuch a Reply is what He does not expect to hear of. 'What ' (ſays He) is *Philoponus*, *c* who lived 600 years ' after Chriſt, an original Evidence *more* than *Grotius*, who lived 1600 years after the Fact? Yes ſurely; becauſe *Grotius* never ſaw *Phlegon*'s Works, [who had the Fact from the *Roman Records*,] as *Philoponus* did: and therefore, if *Philoponus* and thoſe other *Antients* may be alowed to have been *faithfull* in *tranſcribing* from *Phlegon*; then, by our *Anti-phl.* own way of arguing, whatever they have ſo *tranſcribed* concerning the Fact, muſt be deemed an *Authentic Account*. I am thinking, in order to illuſtrate this Matter; what if the precious Works of BAYLE (the laſt of the *Moderns* nam'd by our *Anti-phl.*) ſhould happen by ſome turn of Fate (which I own, is by no means likely) to be irrecoverably loſt; and our *Anti-phl.* ſhould luckily have *tranſcrib'd* ſome memorable paſſages from that celebrated Writer; wou'd not his *Evidence* two or three Hundred years hence (provided, His *Fidelity* ſhould not otherwiſe happen to be queſtion'd) paſs for an *Authentic Account?* and would it be a *groſs Impoſition upon the Reader*, if He ſhould be told, that our *Anti-phl.* was more an *original Evidence*, than any other, who had never *ſeen* the Works

*c p.* 6. 7. Def.

*Works* of *Bayle*? When *Dugdale*'s *Warwickſhire* is produc'd in any Court at *Weſtminſter-Hall*; I have been told, that his known *Fidelity* in tranſcribing from *Record.*, makes every thing paſs as *Authentick*, tho' the *Records* ſhould be loſt: But will any one ſay, that *Dugdale* who *ſaw* the Records, and faithfully tranſcrib'd from them; is not an *Original Evidence MORE* than He, who never ſaw the *Records*, but only tranſcrib'd from *Dugdale*? and yet ſuch a *tranſcript*, when ſo well atteſted, that you cannot juſtly diſpute its faithfullneſs, is, I find, by the Conceſſion of our *Anti-Phl.* himſelf, to be reckon'd an *Authentick* Writing. I therefore muſt agree with you, in thinking our *Anti-Phl.* to be a very great *Trifler*, in his way of talking about *Original Teſtimonies*; *Original Evidence*; *Authentic Records* and *Chronicles*; *Authentick Accounts*; and *Authentick Writing*-----All this is meer *Jargon*; 'tis caſting a Miſt before People's Eyes; or, to uſe his own Phraſe, 'tis a *moſt groſs Impoſition upon his Reader*.

*A.* There's another groſs Impoſition upon his Reader, that runs through both his *Diſſertation* and *Defence*; which I will now remind you of; 'tis this: He would have his Reader believe, that *Phlegon* ſaid nothing *more*, really and truly in his Olympiads concerning this *Eclipſe*, than what is recorded, in a ſhort Chronological manner, by *Euſebius*; and you perceive his Drift all along is to make the Deſcription of his *Natural* Eclipſe to *agree*

*d* p. 7. of his Defence.

*gree* with the ſame ſhort Deſcription that *Euſebius* and *Jerom* have given: and yet I dont find, but Mr. *Wh*---'s *diſtinguiſhing Characters* will ſtill make the *Difference* between *Phlegon*'s and *Kepler*'s Eclipſe, even according to *Euſebius*'s ſhort Account; batin the *ninth* Hour; which perhaps is not to be decided, till Mr. *Wh.* takes the Pains again to calculate by his *Copernicus*. But, I ſay, there are many more Writers, both before and after *Euſebius*'s time, who had it all in their Power (as I have obſerved already) to look into *Phlegon*'s Works themſelves, for *ſeveral Hundred Years*. It muſt then be proper to ſee, what *Extracts* theſe *ancient Writers* have made from *Phlegon*'s Works, as well as *Eu-zebius*, concerning this *Eclipſe*: and if neither the *Fidelity* of theſe Writers, nor the *genuineſs* of their Extracts in this reſpect can truly be call'd in queſtion; 'tis then evident, that whatever *diſtinguiſhing Characters* ſhall be found in ſuch *Extracts* concerning *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, ought to be apply'd in Oppoſition to *Kepler*'s or any other *Natural* Eclipſe, that ſhall be brought upon the *Tapis*: ſo that it will be incumbent on our *Anti-phl.* either to prove ſuch *Extracts* not to be *genuine* (for *Phlegon*'s Works were extant) or elſe to reconcile thoſe *Characters*, found in *them*, with ſuch *Eclipſe* as He ſhall next think fit to produce.

*B.* I like the Propoſal; and your arguing upon it is very juſt: but I'm afraid there will be ſome troubleſome Work for you in proving the *Genuineneſs* of ſome of theſe *Extracts*. Both Mr. *Wh.* and our *Anti-Phl.* (you know) have excepted to *that*

of *Africanus* already, which is ſo material a one; Good Succeſs to your *Enquiries* however. You'll oblige me firſt, in laying theſe *Extracts* before me, ſo long as *Plegon*'s Works were known to be *extant*; and then defend *them* as well as you can: 'Tis a certain Conſequence, that none will deny, *viz.* that if ſuch *Extracts* are *genuine*, and remain as *ſuch* unconteſted; or if conteſted, the Arguments ſhall be found trifling or of no Force; (ſuch as our *Anti-phl.* has hitherto dealt in) then, I ſay, whatever *diſtinguiſhing Characters* of an Eclipſe, ſhall be found in ſuch *Extracts*; if they will not ſuit with a *Natural* Eclipſe, they muſt and ought to be apply'd to one that is *ſupernatural*.

*A.* Pleaſe then to take the *Extracts*, as follows; and I will then make the beſt *Defence* I can, againſt the Objections that are or *ſhall* be made againſt the *genuineneſs* of any of them. You muſt remember, that, at our laſt Meeting, I ſaid ſomething in Defence of *Africanus*'s Fragment in *Syncellus*, in Oppoſition to what had been argued both by our *Anti-phl.* and Mr. *Wh.* You may preſently expect to hear more upon that Subject; but firſt take the *Extracts*; as they now ſtand in the Authors themſelves.

*Africanus* apud *Syncell.* pag. 322, 323.

Τὸ Κόσμικον Τέρας ἡλίου ἔκλειψις ὑποτοσίδων ἔν τι Καισαρείᾳ ὅλην. Φλέγων ἱστορεῖ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐν Παντελήνῳ ἔκλειψιν ἡλίου γεγονέναι τελείαν ἀπὸ ὥρας ἕκτης μέχρις ἐννάτης ὅλον ὡς ἑαυτήν.

Let

" Let this univerſal Prodigy (the miraculous Darkneſs at Chriſt's Death) be ſuppos'd to be the *ſame* as an Eclipſe of the Sun, ſince in reſpect of our ſight 'twas all one. *Phlegon* tells us, that, in *Tiberius Cæſar's* Reign, at the time of the *Full Moon*, there was a Total Eclipſe of the Sun from the *ſixth* Hour to the *ninth*. 'Tis plain, (ſays *Africanus*) He ſpeaks of *this*. i. e. *this* Eclipſe or miraculous Darkneſs; which *Africanus* had juſt before been talking of; and which *Thallus*, (a *Heathen* Writer) He ſays, had call'd an *Eclipſe* of the Sun, in the *third* Book of his Hiſtory.

II

Tertull. *Apol.* Cap. 21.

" Eodem momento Dies media, Orbem ſignante Sole, ſubducta eſt. Deliquium utiq' putaverunt, qui id quoq' ſuper Chriſto prædicatum non ſcierunt: ratione non deprehenſa, negaverunt. Et tamen *eum mundi Caſum relatum in Arcanis* (Archivis) *veſtris habetis.*

" Exactly at the ſame time, (*that Chriſt was upon the Croſs*) Day-light was withdrawn, at Mid-Day. They realy at firſt took it for a regular Eclipſe; who were *alſo* ignorant,

'that ſuch Darkneſs was foretold of
'Chriſt: But when they came to con-
'ſider the matter, (that it was then
'*full Moon*) and cou'd not find out the
'meaning of it, they deny'd, that it
'was an Eclipſe, (*ſuch* a one) as they
'firſt took it for. And yet this
'Event or ſtrange accident you have
'related in your *Archives*.

## III

*Origen* contra *Celſum* pag. 80, 96.

'Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος Ἐκλεί-
'ψεως, ἧ Βασιλεύοντος καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἔοικεν ἐσ-
'ταυρῶσθαι, καὶ περὶ τῶν μεγάλων τότε γε-
'νομένων σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς, ἀνέγραψε καὶ Φλέ-
'γων ἐν τῷ τρισκαιδεκάτῳ, οἶμαι, τῶν χρονι-
'κῶν.

But concerning the *Eclipſe* under *Tiberius Cæſar*, in whoſe Reign, it ſeems, Jeſus was crucified; and concerning the great *Earthquakes* which *then* happen,d; *Phlegon* has written in the 13*th* Book (as I think it is) of his *Chronicles*.

'Οἴεται δὲ (Κέλσος) τεραστίαν εἶναι καὶ
'τὸν σεισμὸν καὶ τὸ σκότος. περὶ ὧν, καὶ
'τὸ δυνατὸν, ἐν τοῖς ἀνωτέρω ἀπελογησάμη-
'θα, παραθέμενοι τὸν Φλέγοντα ἱστορήσαντα
'καὶ τὸν χρόνον τῷ πάθει τῷ Σωτῆρος τοι-
'αῦτα ἀπηντηκέναι.

Cel-

‘ *Celſus* fancies the Earthquake and the Darkneſs to be *fictitious Wonders*; concerning which matters We have, according to our ability, made our *Defence* above; producing *Phlegon*, who *relates that ſuch things happened at the* time *of our Saviour's Paſſion.*

IV

*Lucianus* Martyr *A. D.* 310. ap. *Rufin* in *Euſeb.* Hiſt. Eccl. ix. 6.

‘ Requirite in Annalibus veſtris; (*Romanis*) invenietis, Temporibus *Pilati*, Chriſto patiente, fugato ſole, interruptum tenebris Diem.

‘ Look into your (*Roman*) Annals; you'l find there, that, in the time of *Pilate*, when Chriſt ſuffer'd and the Sun had the Almighty's order to diſappear; the Light of the Day was interrupted with Darkneſs.

V

*Maximus* in ſchol. p. 97.

‘ Μέμνηται μέν και Φλέγων ὁ Ελληνικὸς χρονογράφος εν τρισκαιδεκάτῳ χρονογραφιῶν εν τῇ σγ Ολυμπιάδι, τῆς ἐκλείψεως ταύτης, παρὰ τὸ Εἰωθὸς αὐτὴν λέγων γενέσθαι, ὅ μὲν τόν τρόπον ἀνέγραψε.

‘ *Phlegon* the Grecian Chronologer, in the 13th Book of his Chronicle, mentions *this* Eclipſe (*the Darkneſs*

*at*

'*at Chriſt's Crucifixion*) in his 203 O-
'lympiad: and *ſays*, that it came to
'paſs *contrary to the uſual courſe of*
'*Nature*; but He (*Phlegon*) did not
'deſcribe the *manner* of it.

VI

*Oroſius* Hiſtor. VII. 4.

'Quod, non ſolum ſanctorum E
'vangeliorum Fides, ſed etiam *ali-*
'*quanti Græcorum Libri* atteſtantur.
'Sane *Aſiæ Civitates* illo Terræ
'motu dirutas, tributo diſmiſſo, pro-
'pria etiam libertate donavit (Tibe-
'rius.)

'Which (*præternatural Darkneſs*)
'is atteſted to, not only by the Au-
'thority of the *Goſpels*, but by ſome
'*Books of the Grecian Writers*. 'Tis
'alſo true, that *Tiberius* made thoſe
'Cities in *Aſia* free from Tribute,
'and gave them their own liberty,
'which had been thrown down by
'this Earthquake.

VII

## VII

*Chronicon.* Alexand. ad an. Tiberij XVIII.

Καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος ἐπὶ ὅλην τὸν κόσμον ἀπὸ ἕκτης τῆς ὥρας. περὶ ἧς σκότους μέμνηται Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης ἐν τῇ πρὸς Πολύκαρπον Ἐπιστολῇ, τῆς κατὰ τὸ ἔτος γενομένης καινοπρεπῶς τῷ ἡλίῳ ἐκλείψεως. Καὶ οἱ ἔξωθεν δὲ τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν τοῦτον ἐπισημήναντο, ἀσφαλῶς εἰπόντες, καὶ τὸν σεισμὸν γενόμενον καὶ καταξαίρετον Φλέγων, ὁ τὰς Ὀλυμπιάδας συναγαγών, λέγει γὰρ ἐν τῷ ιγ συγγράμματι οὕτως. Τῷ δὲ τετάρτῳ ἔτει τῆς ΣΒ Ὀλυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἔκλειψις ἡλίου μεγίστη τῶν ἐγνωσμένων πρότερον. καὶ νὺξ ὥρᾳ ἕκτῃ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥστε καὶ ἀστέρας ἐν οὐρανῷ φανῆναι, σεισμός τε μέγας κατὰ Βιθυνίαν γενόμενος. Ταῦτα ὁ Φλεγὼν εἰπὼν, γνὺς τὸ παράδοξον τῆς Ἐκλείψεως τοῦ ἡλίου. οὔτε γὰρ ἠκούσθη, οὐδὲ γέγονεν ἐοῖς ἔμπροσθεν αἰῶσιν περὶ τὴν πανσέληνον ἔκλειψις ἡλίου.

And the Sun was darkened over all the World from the ſixth Hour. Of which darkneſs *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite* makes mention in his Epiſtle to *Polycarp*, as of an extraordinary Eclipſe of the Sun this Year. Other Writers likewiſe (*whether Heathen or Jewiſh*) have pointed out this ſame year; roundly affirming, that there was both an *Earthquake* and a *diſtinguiſhing* one too from all others. (*particularly*

larly) *Phlegon*, who collected the *Olimpiads*, ſays thus in his 13*th* Book; *Now in the* 4*th year of the* 202 *Olympiad, there was the greateſt Eclipſe of the Sun that ever was Known: and night came on at the Sixth Hour of the Day, inſomuch that the ſtars alſo appeared in the Sky; There was alſo a great Earthquake in Bithynia.* Theſe things are related by the Author juſt now quoted, *who Knew and own'd the extraordinary* nature of this Eclipſe of the Sun: For an Eclipſe of the Sun, when it was *Full Moon*, is a thing that was never heard of, or ever happen'd in any age before.

VIII

*Philoponus de Creatione* p. 88, 89, 116.

'ὅτι δὲ τῆς ἐντῶ ϛαυρῶ τὲ Δεσπότε χριϛὲ γενομένης τὲ ἡλίε ἐκλείψεως, καὶ ὧδ' ἐλέγετο ἐμνήσθη καὶ Φλέγων, ᾧ τοσοῦτον μὲν ἐκ τῆ λέγειν μὴ ἐγνῶσθαι τὴν τοιαύτην ἔκλειψιν τοῖς πρότερον χρόνοις ἐϛὶ δῆλον. εἷς γὰρ τρόπος ἐϛὶν ἀπάϛης ἐκλείψεως ἡλιακῆς Φυσικός. — Καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆς δὲ περὶ Καισάρος ἱϛορίας δείκνυται. Βασιλεύειν μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν φήσιν ὁ Φλέγων, τῶ δευτέρῳ ἔτει τῆς ἑκατοϛῆς ἐνενηκοϛῆς ὀγδόης Ὀλυμπιάδος. Τὴν δὲ ἔκλειψιν γεγονέναι ἐν τῶ τετάρτῳ ἔτει τῆς διακοϛῆς δευτέρας Ὀλυμπιάδος. &c.

'Now

'Now 'tis evident that *Phlegon* 'takes notice of the *Eclipſe* happening at the Crucifixion of our *Lord* 'Chriſt, and *no other*; firſt, becauſe 'he ſays, that there never was known '*ſuch* an Eclipſe in former times: for 'there is but *one natural* way of every Eclipſe of the Sun. 'Tis moreover evident from the very Hiſtory 'of *Tiberius Cæſar*: For *Phlegon* ſays, 'He began to reign on the 2*d* Year 'of the 198*th* Olympiad; but tha 'the Eclipſe happened in the 4*th* Year 'of the 202*d* Olympiad, *&c.*

'Διὸ ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἡ ἐπὶ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Σω-
'τῆρος ἡλιακὴ γέγονεν ἔκλειψις, ἐν πανσελή-
'νῳ γενομένη, ἧς καὶ Φλέγων ἐν ταῖς Ολυμ-
'πιάσι μεμνῆται.

'Wherefore *that* Eclipſe of the Sun, 'which was at the Crucifixion of our Saviour Chriſt, was *ſupernatural*, as 'being at the *Full Moon*; of which 'Phlegon alſo makes mention in his 'Olympiads.

Thus have I given you ſome *Teſtimonies* concerning the miraculous Eclipſe at our Saviour's Paſſion: and I now deſire, you will *view* 'em in the following Light. *Some* of them, you obſerve, tell us, that *more Greek* Writers than *one*, have taken notice of this *preternatural* Darkneſs; others, you may eaſily imagine, were taken from the *Roman Records* themſelves by ſome of the moſt ancient

Writers that we have mention'd; and those, that did not consult the *Records*, we may justly conclude, did take what they have said upon that Subject, from the *Works* of *Phlegon* himself; because, as I have shewn, his *Works* were *extant* even in the *ninth* Century; and the several Writers, that I have produc'd to you out of Mr. *W---*'s Catalogue, with some little Variation in the *English*, are known to have flourish'd long before that time. So that you see, how *groundless* the Suggestion is in our *Anti-Phlegonist*, concerning these *Ancients transcribing from one another*, when they had *Phlegon*'s Works to peruse themselves; and with what an assuming Air He puts the Question, I just now took notice of, after he has nam'd *Africanus*, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Maximus*, *Jerome*, the *Chronicon Alexandr.* *Philoponus* and *Malela*; 'What reason, * says He, can be gi-'ven, why *several* of these are cited as Original 'Testimonies, to the Darkness at the Passion, 'and to *Phlegon*'s Authority, *which will not E-'QUALLY prove every modern Writer*, that has ci-'ted *Phlegon* or has mention'd the Darkness at 'the Passion, to be an Original Testimony? *Risum teneatis?*

*B.* This Gentleman's singular *Confidence* gave me no small Disturbance, you may please to remember, when I last saw you: and therefore I am the less surpriz'd to hear Him talking in this manner now. But I wish heartily, He would have *reform'd* in one Particular, and not gone on *canting*, (as He does in the *Preface* to his rare *Defence*) in still

* Def. p. 6, 7.

ſtill telling the World, that his deſtroying *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony, *in ſo important a Cauſe, is doing a real ſervice to Chriſtianity*. I ſee then, in this Gentleman's great Wiſdom, and out of a *ſincere* regard (it ſeems) for the Welfare of the Chriſtian Religion at this time of Day; We are only to *pity*, but no longer to *hearken* to thoſe great *Lights* of the Chriſtian Church, which you have been mentioning. I heartily thank you for thus applying theſe *ſelect* Teſtimonies; and ſhould our *Anti-Phleg.* go on putting his Queſtion, *What reaſon can be given*, &c. I am throughly ſatisfied, if ſuch *Teſtimonies* are *genuine*, His *Queſtion* will be no more regarded, than his Declaration is, as a *Miniſter of the Goſpel*, that He is doing *great Service to the Cauſe of Chriſt*.

*A.* Sir, as to the *Genuineneſs* of theſe *Teſtimonies*; I grant you, it ought to be ſpoke to: and this is what I now propoſe to do; and withal to make ſome other *Remarks* (as may be uſeful in the preſent Enquiry) upon the ſeveral *Teſtimonies* which I have here alledg'd. As to *Africanus*; ſomewhat, you know, has been ſaid already, when we laſt met: I have *this* farther to add; and I deſire no greater Streſs may be laid upon it, than what you think the Matter of *Fact* may deſerve. Mr. *Wh.* wiſhes the *MSS.* of *Syncellus* were conſulted in this Matter: but *why* He does ſo, I cannot eaſily conceive; when he muſt know, that perhaps the moſt ancient, moſt [*a*] perfect and moſt valuable *MS.* of

 *Syncellus*,

*a* Geo. *Syncellus* inter ſapientiſſimas Regiæ Bibliothecæ opes latenter ſervatus. *Ita* de hoc *MS.* P. *Goar* in Epiſt. Nuncup.

*Syncellus* (now extant) has been publiſh'd *with ſo much Fidelity and Exactneſs* from the Royal Library in *France* by the learned P. *Goar*, that more cannot reaſonably be expected to ſatisfy the moſt *curious* in that reſpect. And, when *Scaliger* ſhew'd a great uneaſineſs, (as appears by his *Epiſtles*) till he had ſeen this *MS.* in order to compleat his *Animadverſions* on *Euſebius*'s *Chronicon*; and when afterwards He acted the Part of a ſour *Critick* upon the *MS.* itſelf; the World was ſoon convinc'd, that P. *Goar* had Abilities ſufficient to ſhew, that a ſupercilious *Critick* had committed many Miſtakes in that Affair, and thereby often offer'd Violence to *Syncellus*. The Text then of *Africanus*, in the preſent Diſpute, as publiſh'd from *Syncellus* by P. *Goar*, ſtands thus.----

*B.* Sir, I ask Pardon for interrupting you: but I could wiſh, before you enter into the Conſideration of *Africanus*'s Text, that you would inform me a little about this *Syncellus* who has preſerv'd ſuch a curious *Fragment* to us. Oh! that He had luckily preſerv'd another *Fragment* or two of *Thallus*, and thoſe other *Grecian* Writers, that the Author of the *Chronicon Alexandrinum* made uſe of; I am throughly perſuaded, that our *Anti-Phl.* could then have had no Pretence (unleſs from the different *Epocha*'s in *Tiberius*'s Reign, which I perceive He has artfully conceal'd) to have drawn Himſelf into ſuch a Debate; and for ſtriking ſuch glorious *Teſtimonies* (as thoſe of *Phlegon* and *Origen*) out of Dr. *Clarke*'s Lectures. However, it would well have become Him, I ſhould think

think, when He was making his *Apology* (in the Preface to his *Defence*) to have given the World ſome ſmall Account at leaſt of *what the* Dr. *had to ſay for Himſelf*, before he parted with thoſe *ancient Writers*; and, among other *Reaſons* there aſſign'd, to have given us *one*; why Dr. *Clarke*, after ſuch *Conviction* (as our *Anti-Phl.* would have us believe) ſhould ſay nothing of the matter Himſelf; nor commit any thing to Writing, ſignifying *why* He was prevail'd upon *to leave out* theſe Teſtimonies; no, not one *Note* to explain Himſelf, when a New Edition ſhould be wanted: and if our *Anti-Phl.* will tell us, that He is not to anſwer for the Doctor's Conduct in this Matter; He ſhould then have aſſign'd a better *Reaſon* than *that* from Mr. *Wh--*'s *Memoirs*, *why* the World was not to know it, *in ſo important a Cauſe* (as He calls it Himſelf) till the Doctor *was dead*, and could not ſpeak for Himſelf. But I forget to aſk,--- I deſire to hear ſomething about *Syncellus*; the rather, becauſe Mr. *Wh.*, I obſerve, repreſents Him but *oddly*; For He makes him an *inaccurate* Tranſcriber; and appeals, for this purpoſe, as well to the *Reading* of *Euſebius* in the *Greek*, as of *Jerome* in the *Latin* Verſion, when compar'd with the remaining Part of this Fragment of *Africanus*; as he does alſo to the *Complaints* of *Theophanes*, *Goar* and *Scaliger*, in that reſpect. *Theophanes* is an Author, that I as ſeldom hear of as *Syncellus*; and, methinks, I ſhould have a better Notion of the Subject you are going to ſpeak to, if ſomething might firſt be truly ſaid in behalf of *Syncellus*'s Abilities, accuracy and Fidelity:

*A.* None

*A.* None can give a better or truer Account of *Syncellus*, than his Contemporary *Theophanes*; who alſo undertook the *continuance* of *Syncellus*'s Chronography: for which Account, I muſt refer you to the *Byzantine* Hiſtory [*a*] and P. *Goar*'s Preface. You will there find, that *Syncellus* ſometimes ſeverely corrected the Faults of *Euſebius* himſelf; and *Allatius* condemns the hard Language that *Syncellus undeſervedly* met with from *Scaliger*. *Voſſius* [*b*] expreſly ſays, 'that *Syncellus* often had 'juſt reaſon to differ from *Euſebius*; and ſometimes '*Syncellus* (ſays He) was as culpable as the other. The Character that *Theophanes* gives of *Syncellus* is a very ſingular one, *viz.* that he was a Man of *great Learning*; [*c*] one that had turn'd over the old

[*a*] Vid. L. *Allatij* Diatr. de *Georgij* ap. Hiſt. *Byzant* p. 324. ubi *Syncelli* ſtudium, Diligentium, & in contexenda Hiſtoria conatus, *Theophanes* Iſaurus, Hiſtoriæ illius Continuator varie expreſſit. ib. p. 325, ita de *Syncello Allatius*; Quemadmodum '*Euſebius Africanum* & alios, qui ante eum huic Scriptioni manum admoverunt, caſtigabat; ſic ipſum *Euſebium* Geo. iſte *Syncellus*, *ubi quid Ille paulo alienius à vero dixit, aut fecit*, graviter objurgavit. Eum (*Syncellum*) merito ab *Euſebio* diſſentire ſæpe, ſæpe etiam immerito, *Joſ. Scaliger* paſſim conatus eſt oſtendere in *Euſebij* Chronico; cui (*Scaligero*) ut in multis ſubſcribe, ita *in pluribus meram animi contentionem agnoſces*.--- A *Joſepho Scal.* probe et honeſte diſſentio; maledicentiamq; illam in Auctorem tantopere ab eo perpolitam condemno. Fruſtra enim in *immeritum ac optimum Scriptorem* convicia illa, quæ ſine Stomacho non audies, jaciuntur.

[*b*] Meritò ſæpe ab *Euſebio* diſſentit Geo. *Syncellus*--- eſt etiam cum *Syncellus* ipſe non minus latæ ſit culpæ reus. *Voſſ.* de Hiſtor. Gr. L. 2. C. 24.

[*c*] πολυμαθ ἑστα]ος

old Hiſtoriographers, and examin'd 'em *accurately*, or with uncommon Diligence ; [*d*] and that no body before Him had written in the *Chronographical* way like Him. [*e*] As to the *MS.* of *Syncellus*, which contains this remarkable Fragment of *Africanus*, (now in the King of *France*'s Library, found at *Corinth* above 200 Years ago) it appears to be about 700 Years old; *Syncellus* himſelf flouriſhing about A. D. 790. This *Ms.* notwithſtanding it's Antiquity, *P. Goar* ſays, is whole and in good condition, excepting *three Leafes*, which relate to Affairs, from the time of *Valerian Probus*.

It appears farther, how exceeding [*f*] careful *P. Goar* was, in giving us the *Text* of *Syncellus*, as He found it in this *ancient Ms.*; and being ſo ancient, I ſhou'd think *P. Goar* might be depended on in this Matter, without making any farther ſearch after *MS.* There are ſeveral *Imperfect MS.* of of *Syncellus* (as the *Bodleian* Catalogue informs us) to be met with here in *England:* But *P. Goar* ſays, that there was not in the World, as He cou'd find out, above *one* or *two* more compleat *MS.* of *Syncellus.* beſides *this*: For what were taken from *this Ms.* are not to be reckon'd. Now, after a ſtrict Collation made by *P. Goar* with thoſe other *MS.*; the *Text* relating to *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe ſtands thus in the *Royal* one, juſt as our *Anti-phl.* has copy'd it; and who

[*d*] ἀκριβῶς διεξερευνησάμενος ἀκριβῶς συνεγράψατο

[*e*] ἀδεὶς ἄλλος τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ

[*f*] Georgij Opus, haud meum, publico daturus, *Syncelli Textum, verba, apices*, fideliter excerpta &c. *Goar* in Præf.

who (to do Him juſtice) does not talk of *Interpolations* or *Inaccuracy*, as Mr. *Wh.* does; but only ſays in general, [g] that *Africanus* was in the number of thoſe, *who had a ſcurvy trick of lying for God's ſake*. *Africanus*'s Words then, as I lately repeated them, ſtand thus in *Syncellus*'s Text.

> Φλέγων ἱστορεῖ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐν πανσελήνῳ ἔκλειψιν ἡλίου γεγονέναι τελείαν ἀπὸ ὥρας ἕκτης μέχρις ἐννάτης: δῆλον ὡς Ταύτην.
>
> *Phlegon* relates, that in *Tiberius Cæſar*'s Reign, there was a total Eclipſe of the Sun, when it was *Full Moon*, from the *ſixth* Hour to the *ninth*: tis plain, He ſpeaks of *this*. ------ i. e. (*this Eclipſe at* Full Moon, *when Chriſt ſuffer*'d; *which Africanus is juſt before talking of*.

Now Mr. *VVh.* is pleas'd to fancy, that the words, *at the full Moon*, and *to the ninth Hour*; were either *late* Interpolations that had crept out of the Margin into the Text of a *Mſ*, that is *ſeven Hundred* years old; or elſe, that *Syncellus* himſelf (in the *eighth* Century) might have *inaccurately* tranſcrib'd theſe Words, *full Moon* and *ninth Hour* into his Text. It ſo happens for once, that inſtead of Mr. *VVh.* we have got the *Anti-phl.* on our ſide. He rebukes Mr. *VVh.* pretty ſharply, ‡ and, I think, very juſtly. ‘ 'Tis not enough, ſays He, to ſay, ‘ that *very probably* theſe are later *Interpolations*: for ‘ 'tis certain, that this *Addition* (as He our *Ant-phl.* calls

[g] Def. p. 20, 21, 22.

calls it) to *Phlegon*'s Teſtimony is as old as *Africanus*'s time; and ſince we find it in *Fact* in *Africanus*; whence ſo probably did it come as from *Africanus* himſelf? ſo that this merry Gentleman grants to Mr. *VVh.* (you ſee) that thoſe Words, *Full Moon* and *ninth Hour*, were *genuine* Words in *Africanus*'s Copy 1500 Years ago: but then denys, that *Africanus* had any right to place 'em there. And yet tis obſervable, after he has made this bold confident Aſſertion, He ſeems to be ſadly puzzl'd, what to ſay for Himſelf; (as indeed well He might be after ſuch a conceſſion) That *Africanus* was *far* from being a *Credulous* or a *careleſs* Writer; He knew was a thing, that was not to be deny'd; that *Africanus* was the moſt learned, faithful, and accurate Chronologer of all Antiquity; the World (He knew likewiſe) was agreed in. *Photius* read *Africanus*'s Works in the *ninth* Century; He tells us * that the whole

* *Photij* Bibl. Cod. 34. Ἔστι (Ἀφρικανὸς) σύνθημος μὲν, ἀλλὰ μηδὲν τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἱστορηθῆναι παραλείπων. Ita etiam de eodem *Africano P. Goar* (in Praf. ad Geo. *Syncelli* Chron) 'Non arcana modo Scripturæ, ſed omnium pene Gentium 'Bibliothecas evolverat. Nay *Africanus* was, for his Learning and Judgment, ſo conſiderable a Perſon in the World, that He ſometimes ſhew'd even *Origen* himſelf his *Errors*. vid. Du Pin Vol. 1. p. 116. But it was the *Love of Truth*, *Du Pin* add's, *pure Sincerity* in *Africanus*, that made Him engage with *Origen*, and not any Itch of Diſputing. Il paroit pourtant qu' Africanus lui ecrivoit plutôt pour S'inſtruire de la Verite, que pour diſputer contre lui (Origene.) There was a humble happy temper of mind in *Africanus*; whilſt He was ſeeking out for Inſtruction Himſelf, He was really informing others. A beautiful Character this! And yet, tis plain, our *Antiphlegon*: has *now* nothing left, but to *rob* Africanus of *it*.

whole consisted of 14 Books in 5 Volumes; and then gives this character of Him, viz. That He was a concise Author indeed, but had *omitted* nothing that was proper to be known. But our *Anti-phl.* is of another opinion; that *Africanus* was rather guilty of *adding* what shou'd *not* have been said, than *omitting* what shou'd have been known: and therefore, being reduc'd to some straits, after such concession, that *the full Moon and the ninth Hour* were the *genuine* Words of *Africanus*; He soon bethought himself of the old useful *Maxim*; *Calumniare fortiter*---- roundly affirming, that *Africanus* was an arrant *impostor*. He does this indeed with some *seeming* confusion: but I defy the most abandon'd *Libertine* amongst us, to speak more villanously of the *Ancients* (not the least Distinction made) than the Lecturer of St. *James*'s has here done, at the same time that he is puzled. I *know not very well, how to account for it*; (says He) † *But in fact the Men of the second and third Centuries had a scurvy trick of lying for God's sake.*

*B.* Those Gentlemen, (I forgot to tell you) that I was giving you some Account of this Morning, were wonderfully pleas'd with *this Expression* of our *Anti-phl.* and *it* being deliver'd in that gross *loose* manner, wou'd be of much greater service, they said; and they cou'd now better apply *it* upon any Occasion, when those *mysterious* sayings about the *Trinity* shou'd be trump'd up upon 'em out of *Ignatius*, *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian* &c. Alas! can this *Anti-phl.* imagin, that He has a right to *Civil*

† Def. p. 21.

*Civil Treatment* from any orthodox member of the Christian Church? I begin to think, He does not expect it: For I observe in the Preface to his *Defence*, He is very apprehensive, that *many* don't take Him for a *Friend* to the Religion, He professes. He may assure Himself, the Number is very great that think *so* of Him; and they think moreover, that any Person must be an *Enemy* to it, who wou'd destroy *Testimonies* of such importance; that shine so clearly in defence of Christiany, amidst the Works of those venerable learned Writers, that you have lately been talking of. But not to dwell much upon such an odious Topick; pray, how does *Scaliger* differ from the *ancient Ms.* of *Syncellus*, in this particular about *Africanus*'s citing *Phlegon*, concerning the *Full Moon* and the *ninth Hour*?

A. *Scaliger* complains in several of his Epistles,* that some Author or Antiquary had sadly abus'd this *Ms.* of *Syncellus* in the *Royal* Library; but hop'd, that the *Vatican Ms.* wou'd supply the Defects of the other; However, owns, that He had receiv'd such Advantages from *Syncellus*, in the *Royal* Library, that no other Writer cou'd have afforded

* Inter Georgii (Syncelli) Textus à *Scaligero* vitiatos, truncatos, immutatos vel omissos, (inquit P. *Goar* p. 528.) *hæc* omittit *Scaliger*; viz. ἔκλειψις ὑπονοείσθω ἔν τι καθὰ τὴν ὄψιν Φλέγων ἱστορεῖ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐν πανσελήνῳ ἔκλειψιν ἡλίου. Here *Scaliger* has left out the Words *Full Moon*, but not the *ninth Hour*, no more than the *Sixth*; for had *that* been done, it wou'd have *clash'd* with the Passage in his *Eusebius*.

* vid. *Scal.* Epp, L. 2. Ep. 159, 161, &c.

afforded Him. † *Scaliger* owns ‖ this *Ms.* to have been written but 200 Years after the Author's time; and that the Character or Manner of writing ſhews it to be ſo; and, in another Epiſtle (163) He ſays expreſſly, 'that He did not believe, there was an 'older *Ms.* of *Syncellus* extant, than this in the 'Royal Library.' But, as I obſerv'd from *Huetius*, when I laſt ſaw you, *Scaliger* cou'd not help thinking, that by the Word ἔκλειψις nothing more cou'd be meant than a *natural Eclipſe*; and therefore [in his Opinion] to make it more conſiſtent with his Author has thought fit to leave out that Paſſage in *Syncellus*; as *P. Goar* obſerves. Whereas, tis evident from the *Teſtimonies* juſt now alledg'd, that there were ſeveral things related by *Phlegon* concerning the *miraculous* Eclipſe at Chriſt's Paſſion, that are not taken notice of by *Euſebius*; and yet have every whit as good Authority to ſupport 'em; *Phlegon*'s Works being in the Hands of the learned, (you ſee) for above *four* Hundred Years after *Euſebius*'s time; and *Photius*, as I took notice, was well acquainted with *Africanus*'s writings in the *ninth* Century. *Philoponus*, who flouriſh'd between the times of *Euſebius* and *Photius*, does not only ſay, in general; *tis evident*, that *Phlegon* takes notice of the *Eclipſe* at our Saviour's Paſſion, and *no other*; (there being, ſays He, but *one natural* way of every Eclipſe

† Georgium ex Bibliotheca Regia habeo, non lacunoſum quidem, qualem *Vaticanum* eſſe ferunt, ſed à Bibliographo, ſive Antiquario, multis patribus mutilatum ——— Habeo quæ alius Scriptor ſuppeditare non poſſit &c. Ep. 159.

‖ Ep. 161.

Eclipſe of the Sun; and yet *Phlegon* ſaying of *his* Eclipſe, that there never had been any *ſuch before*] But *Philoponus* afterwards mentions, in particular, the *Full Moon*; *and* takes notice of *Phlegon*, as the Perſon mentioning *it* likewiſe; The Eclipſe, He ſays, was *ſupernatural* at Chriſt's Death; *which Eclipſe* (ἧς ἐκλείψεως) *Phlegon* mentions in his Olympiads. How then? What if we don't learn any thing at this Day from *Euſebius* concerning the *Full Moon*, and we had not ſeen *there* the *ninth* Hour; muſt it therefore follow, that *Phlegon* took no notice of the *Full Moon* or the *ninth* Hour? muſt it follow that *Africanus impos'd* upon the World knowingly and willfully, when He thus cited *Phlegon*? or is *Euſebius* the only Perſon to be credited, as having told the *whole* Truth and nothing but the Truth of this matter? Does not *Origen*, in his Diſpute with *Celſus*, ſay, that *Phlegon* relates ----- *relates* what? It had been very triffling and impertinent in *Origen*, to have ſaid no more, than that *Phlegon* had taken notice of a *wonderful Darkneſs* and an *Earthquake*; *Facts*, that *Celſus* was appriz'd of, as well as Himſelf: But *Origen* proceeds farther, in reminding *Celſus* from the *Date* of *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, that theſe things *happen'd at the time of our Saviour's Paſſion*. It was *this* (no doubt) that confounded *Celſus*; and if He cou'd poſſibly have prov'd *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe to have been a *Natural* one, (as our *Anti-phl.* is endeavouring to do for his party now) or that it did not appear from the *Date* to be truly applied; *Origen*, no doubt, wou'd ſoon have

heard

heard of it from *Celſus*; and *that* knowing and learned Phyſician wou'd never have had recourſe to ſuch mean, ſtupid *ſolutions* of *thoſe Facts*, which He found He cou'd not contradict; being ſo plainly related and ſo juſtly apply'd. Our *Anti-phl.* and Mr. *Wh.* have both rais'd *Doubts* here about rendring the Words κατὰ χρόνον; which is meer *trifling*. Κατὰ μίαν σαββάτων — Upon the firſt Day of the Week, 1. *Cor.* 16. 2. It were eaſy to multiply Inſtances, in ſhewing it: I think *Origen* himſelf has ſufficiently explain'd *it* in another Place himſelf, by uſing the Word (τότε) *tunc*, *then at that time*, inſtead of κατὰ τὸν χρόνον; where He is ſpeaking of *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, and applying it to the *very time* of our Saviour's Paſſion περὶ ὧν μεγάλων ΤΟΤΕγενομένων —— ἀνίγραψε καὶ Φλέγων —— There is alſo a great deal of weakneſs and ill deſign ſhewn by our *Anti-phl.* in his tranſlating *Origen*'s κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν; *We have vindicated theſe things as well as we cou'd*, (κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν) ſo He *tranſlates* it. * He wou'd have the *Engliſh* Reader believe, that *Origen*'s meaning was, that He had ſaid and argu'd as much, as a *bad* Cauſe wou'd allow of; whereas *Origen* moſt certainly cou'd have no other meaning, than that He had been defending (in his Opinion) a *good* Cauſe againſt *Celſus*, to the *utmoſt of his power*; and don't his *power* and abilities appear to have been very *great* in defending ſuch Cauſe? But ſtill it was agreeable to modeſty and humility to ſay no more, than κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν; 'We 'have, *according to our* abilities, ſays *He*, made our 'Defence; having produced the authority of *Phle-* 'gon, who *relates*, that theſe things happen'd at 'the

* Diſſert. p. 25.

'the Time that Chriſt Suffer'd. Does *Phlegon* re-
late this? And what ſays our modeſt *Anti-Phlegon?*
'The truth is, ſays He, † *Origen* knew, that *Phle-*
'*gon*'s Authority cou'd not be proved to *relate* to
'our Saviour's Paſſion, and therefore He very
'fairly gave up his Teſtimony; meaning in his
'*Commentaries*; that have been tranſlated, corrupt-
ed, and mangled by ſome *rude Hand*: But no Bo-
dy well knows *who*; ‖ or how they came to be ſo
*imperfect* and contradictory to the *real Senſe* of *Ori-*
*gen*, in his *Greek original* performance on this Sub-
ject; which was alſo compos'd *long after* this *Com-*
*mentary*! And yet our *Anti-phl.* (the better to ſerve
his Purpoſe) wou'd fain have his Reader to under-
ſtand it otherwiſe: '*Origen*, ſays He, * againſt
'*Celſus* ſtrove to make the beſt of a thing: which,
'when He conſider'd and treated of at large, in
'*another* Place (*his Commentaries*) He fully gives
'up.' What a *vile* way of talking is this of that
great Man; whoſe Reputation He is endeavouring
to *blaſt*, at the ſame time, that He wou'd have the
World in one reſpect to give Him credit! But to
let that paſs ---As to *Origen*'s Latin Commentaries;
I cannot think it neceſſary to ſay any thing further,
after what Mr. *Wh.* has told Him already concern-
ing it: And yet this is the broken Reed our *Anti-*
*phl.* relys upon ſo very much. The Paſſage, which
Mr.

† Differt. p. 28.

‖ vid. *Mills* in *Luke*, 23. 44.

* Diff p. 29.

Mr. *Wh.* cites from *Huetius* to this purpoſe, is ſo very ſtrong and remarkable (eſpecially conſidering, *Huetius* had, of all Men, moſt ſtudied the Works and Opinions of *Origen*) that I cannot but again recommend it to your peruſal, as I did, when I laſt ſaw you. †

*B.* I have carefully perus'd already, what you ſo kindly recommended; and muſt think, the Arguments of *Huetius* and Mr. *Wh.* together will give every impartial Reader full Satisfaction in that Matter. I now beg leave to ask the Reaſon, why *Tertullian* is plac'd by you in the Liſt of antient Writers, as having to do with *Phlegon*; ſince it does not appear, that He made uſe of the name of *Phlegon?*

*A.* 'Tis true, it does not appear: But can you, or any one elſe, read that remarkable Paſſage in his Apology, where He is *Appealing* to the *Roman Records*, and not think of *Phlegon* at the ſame time? 'Tis certain, I have *Scaliger's* Authority for placing this Teſtimony here: For (as I told you this Morning) He makes no doubt, but that *Tertullian* had *Phlegon* in his Thoughts, when He made his *Apology*, in *that* particular; and therefore 'tis much the ſame thing, as if like *Origen* and others, He had expreſſly nam'd *Phlegon.* As to the *Tranſlation* that I have given of *it*, I muſt, for my own part, think, that it contains the plain obvious Senſe of the Author, which our *Anti-phleg.* (both in his *Diſſertation* and *Defence*) has taken ſo much pains

† See Mr. *Wh's* Vindication of *Phlegon's* Teſtimony, p. 30, 31, 32.

pains to render *obſcure*; and that his Negative (*non*) is highly ridiculous. For the ſame reaſon that I place *Tertullian*, I here place *Lucian*; whoſe *Teſtimonies* are *now* both call'd in queſtion, as to their being *Authentic*, † with the moſt conſummate aſſurance by our *Anti-phl.* whithout any *Reaſon* aſſign'd, but only his Will and pleaſure, becauſe He did not like *them*. And, as to Mr. *Wh*'s 20th Teſtimony, which our *Anti-phl.* there likewiſe excepts to, I'l venture to affirm, that, after all the *great Names* which I very well know are to be produc'd in his favour, He will not be able to make out his point ſo cleverly, as He imagins; viz. that *that particular* Epiſtle to *Polycarp* is *ſpurious*. I told you, when I laſt ſaw you, that I thought there was juſt reaſon to believe, many *genuine* Epiſtles of *Dionyſius* were mix'd and huddl'd together with *counterfiet* ones by the *Collector*, who ever He was; and that *this* to *Polycarp* had, in particular, the marks of it's *Authenticity*. I am ſtill of the ſame opinion; and have *more reaſons* to ſupport it, were it neceſſary to aſſign 'em, in oppoſition both to our *Anti-phl.* and Mr. *Wh.* too: tho' it looks very odd in the *latter*, to bring in *Dionyſius*'s Epiſtle as *Evidence*, and yet to call it *ſpurious* at the ſame time.

*B.* Sir, I think, the *Teſtimony*, that you have alledg'd from *Maximus* in the 6th Century, ſeems to countenance very much the *Genuinneſs* of that Epiſtle to *Polycarp*. For, when *Maximus* ſays, that *Phlegon* had not deſcrib'd the *manner* of that Eclipſe;



† Def. p. 8.

it seems to imply, that the *Antients* were not unacquainted otherwise with the *manner* of it, tho' *Phlegon* happen'd to be defective in that point. But there is *one* thing in this Testimony of *Maximus*, that you'l pardon me, if I am beforehand with you in taking notice of it. 'Tis certainly very much to your present Purpose; because it shews that the Passage in *Eusebius* is not to be so esteem'd of, as containing *all* that *Phlegon* had said about this *Eclipse*; and this, I take it, is the Point that you cheifly have in view at present.

*A.* 'Tis true: And I'll turn to the Passage, and read it with you---- It runs thus, (amongst the *Scholion* or Exposition of *Maximus*) '*Phlegon says, this* '*Eclipse happen'd contrary to the usual course of things*; '(or the known Laws of Nature) *but He had not* '*describ'd the* MANNER [1] *of it.*' *Maximus*, you see, is very positive, that *Phlegon* say'd so; and it had been easy to have confuted Him, if the Case had been otherwise: For *Phlegon*'s Works were in People's Hands (as I have more than once observ'd already) for *three* Hundred Years at least after *Maximus*'s Time. But, does *Eusebius* give such an Account from *Phlegon*? Or, must *Maximus*'s Testimony not be allow'd of as good *Evidence*, because 'tis not found in *Eusebius*? Or has our *Anti-phl.* any the least Authority for saying as He does, [2] when He is opposing *Africanus*'s Testimony; '*The Pas-* '*sage*

1 παρὰ τὸ ἐιωθὸς ἀλλὴν λέγων (Φλέγων) γενέσθαι. ὐ μὲν τὸν τρόπον ἀνέγραψε.

2 Differt. p. 14.

' ſage in *Phlegon* itſelf being preſerved, (in *Euſebius*) ' it is *evident*, that *Phlegon* ſays not one Word a- ' bout it's being at the *Full Moon*'? But I humbly conceive, what this Gentleman ſays is far from being *evident*; becauſe, He muſt firſt make it appear, that the *whole* Paſſage in *Phlegon*'s Olympiads relating to this *Eclipſe*, is contain'd in *Euſebius*; which is a peice of Work, you eaſily perceive, He will not care to undertake; for it appears plain enough, that the *whole* Paſſage is not is *Euſebius*. All that I ſhall remark further on the *Teſtimonies* now alledg'd, is from the Words contain'd in the *Chronicon Alexandrinum*; a Work compos'd about *twelve* or *thirteen* Hundred Years ago, according to Mr. *Wh.* or [as more juſtly judg'd by † Dr. *Mills*] ſomewhat *later*; Dr. *Mills* obſerving, that this *Chronicle* contains abundance of Learning ‖ amongſt the *Antients*, not to be met with elſewhere. This Author, whoever He was, ſays thus; [as you have heard already] ' Theſe Things are related by *Phlegon* as



† *Faſtos Siculos* ſeu *Chronicon Alexandrinum*, quo mundi Tempora ad decimum uſq *Heraclij* Conſulatum, ſeu A. D. 628, diſpoſuit Auctor, quiſquis Ille. In prol. p. 98, 99. *ed. Kuſt.*

‖ In hoc Chronico varijs Veterum Monumentis, nuſquam alibi reperiendis, pleno. *Millij* Prolegom : in N. T.

'*knowing or* † *owning the extraordinary nature of this* '*Eclipſe of the Sun*: For an Eclipſe of the Sun, 'when it was *Full Moon*, is a thing, that was never 'heard of, or ever happen'd in any age before.' Now, if you ſhall at any time recapitulate, and duly conſider the *Remarks* that I have made upon the ſeveral *Teſtimonies* now laid before you; do but but take the pains to *view 'em* in whatever light you pleaſe; I'm perſuaded, you will be ſoon convinc'd, that our *Anti-phl.* has not the *leaſt Foundation* for ſaying, as He does, that *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe was a *natural* one, or that it had no relation to the *Darkneſs* at our Savious Paſſion. And if you ſhall conclude from the *Remarks*, that *Euſebius* has not told us *all* that was in *Phlegon*'s Olympiads concerning this Eclipſe; it follows, that *Euſebius*'s defect, in that Point, ought to be ſupplied out of the *genuine* Works of thoſe Venerable Writers, that I have been naming to you: And what theu muſt become of our *Anti-phlegon*'s Argument, ſhou'd *Euſebius* fail Him in this Matter? But admitting, that theſe *Paſſages*, I have been *remarking* upon, do imply no more, than *Explications* or Illuſtrations of what is contain'd in *Euſebius* already, *viz.* when He ſays from

† γνὺς (Φλέγων) Τὸ παράδοξον τῆς ἐκλείψεως &c. what is here coll'd παράδοξον, is at the beginning of this Quotation you obſerve) call'd Καινοπρεπὲς; a comPound Word, ſo are and uncommon in the Greek Language, that it ſeems to be uſed on purpoſe; denoting, that it was ſuch a *ſort* of *Darkneſs*, as was *proper* aud *ſuitable* to the Time; that it was *convenient*, the Sun ſhhould hide its Face, when the Lord of Glory was hanging on the Croſs.

from *Phlegon*, that there was the *greateſt Eclipſe of the Sun, that had been known*; (which is the other light theſe *Paſſages* perhaps may be taken in) yet admitting, I ſay, ſuch *Paſſages* to be only a *Gloſs* or Comment upon *Phlegon*; 'tis apparent, our *Anti-phlegon*'s Argument falls to the ground at once; unleſs you can ſuppoſe, that our *Anti-phlegon*'s conſummate *Aſſurance* ought to outweigh the *Judgment* of thoſe primitive Writers; which yet, in his great modeſt, He tells the World, *it* ought to do.

*B.* Believe me, Sir I begin now to be as heartily *Sick* about this *Anti-phlegon*'s behaviour, as He ſeems to be about his *own Work* Himſelf--- 'I ſhall diſ-'miſs all thoughts, ſays He, of a further Exami-'nation of this Subject.' † 'Tis high time indeed, as I ſaid before, this Morning. He talks mightily of *ſerving the Cauſe of Chriſt*. But let Him take care in time: Otherwiſe inſtead of the gentle Appellation of *Anti-phlegoniſt*, He may come to have *that* of *Chriſtomachus*; ſhhich He ſeems to bid fair for already, conſidering his *reviling* conduct towards thoſe very Perſons, who have tranſmitted the *Holy Scriptures* themſelves; and have alſo *atteſted* to this Eclipſe of *Phlegon*, as relating to the ſame *miraculous* Darkneſs, that is *there* recorded. I can eaſily ſay, [as our *Anti-phl.* does at the cloſe of his Preface] *that there cannot be a meaner part acted, than to defend an Error, as the ſupport of Truth, to the laſt Extremity; and when it can be defended no longer; then to give it up with reluctance and unwillingly.*

*A.* I

† Def. p. 61.

*A.* I am as desirous of getting rid of this *Anti-phl.* and laying the Wag *Lucian* before you, as you can be for your Heart: But you know, I was *oblig'd* [and you told me as much, when I last saw you] to say all I *cou'd* [κατὰ δύναμιν] in defence of *Phlegon*; from whom I had talk'd, above a Year before, in a quite different Manner to you, than this Gentleman has since thought fit to do. You told me moreover, that you wanted very much to be inform'd, how I and this *Anti-phl.* cou'd *both* be said to *be doing Service to the Cause of Christ* in this Matter, when we differ'd so extremely in our Opinions about *it*. You have now heard *it* pretty largely discuss'd; and your own Judgment must determine you. You'l excuse me, if I detain you a little longer, in making one or two short Observations upon our *Anti-phlegon*'s *Defence*, before We part with Him: And if He is minded to *proceed*, in this Affair, I'm apt to think, you'l call upon me; and say, 'tis reasonable I shou'd do so too. 'Tis possible, I may have committed *mistakes* in some Things; and I am ready to hear of 'em: But I can venture to affirm, *they* are neither *willful* nor *dangerous* ones; and yet *such* I charge and will charge upon this *Anti-phl.* till I see good Reasons offer'd for my thinking otherwise. But to say no more of this; or without any farther loss of Time, take the following Remarks upon his *Defence*. He first of all bids you observe, that *three* Gentlemen (one of whom is the justly renown'd Dr. *Halley*) have calculated an Eclipse with great *accuracy*; differing *three* or

*four*

*four* Hours from Mr. *Whiſton* in his *Calculation*; But He does not ſay, that theſe Gentlemen were of an *Opinion*, or any thing like it, that this *Natural* Eclipſe and *Phlegon*'s were *one* and the *ſame*. This, I take for granted, He had not leave to ſay; and therefore He ſtands by Himſelf and deſires the Reader *to take his own Word for it*. 'I receiv'd, 'ſays He (p. 61.) from a Gentleman, to whom I 'was then a perfect Stranger, a Computation of 'that Eclipſe; which I CONCEIVED, (or *fan-'cied*) *Phlegon* to mean': And elſewhere (p. 52.) He ſays, 'The Eclipſe, which happened A. D. 29. 'and which I CONTEND that *Phlegon* ſpeaks of, 'laſted at moſt not above *two Minutes*'. Can you eaſily imagin, that the *Antients* wou'd *appeal* to *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe by Name, if it laſted otherwiſe than *three Hours*? Either *their Heads* then were very much out of order, or our *Anti-phlegon*'s muſt be reckon'd ſo. There's no *Medium*: One or the other muſt be admitted. But do we find, that either this unknown *Gentleman*, or Mr. *Hodgſon* or Dr. *Halley*, do any ways CONCEIVE much leſs CONTEND as the Lecturer of St. *James*'s does? Nothing at all of the Matter: So that He is ſtill as far off from proving his Point, as when He firſt ſet out; excepting the *three* or *four* Hours; whence, He thinks, He has got an Advantage over Mr. *Whiſton*; becauſe He has now brought his *Natural* Eclipſe to be *Total* at 12, (which Mr. *Wh.* told Him, was about 9 o'clock) and *therefore* it muſt be the *ſame* (He ſays) as *Phlegon*'s. You can't but

obſerve

obſerve how artfully He blends and confounds theſe *two* Eclipſes together. He firſt *conceives* or fancies 'em to be the *ſame*; and then amuſes his Reader with *Computations*, as if the Makers of them really *conceiv'd*, as He has done. Thus, when the unknown Gentleman ſays--- 'At *Cairo* I make the middle of 'THIS Eclipſe to have happen'd juſt at noon; but 'at *Jeruſalem*, not till above a quarter of an Hour after noon; when the accurate Mr. *Hodgſon* is ſaid 'to have communicated to Him his Calculation of 'the SAME Eclipſe; that the greateſt Obſcuration, according to Him, at *Jeruſalem* was at 12h 24 Minutes; and that the duration of Total Darkneſs was 1'--31" and when Dr. *Halley* ſays; Having reviſed a former Calculation, which I had made of 'THIS Eclipſe, &c. I find, that THIS Eclipſe 'was Total at *Jeruſalem*, or near it, about 11 'Minutes after Noon, and that where it was Central at that Time, the Darkneſs was not leſs than 1'--40"; I ſay, our *Anti-phl.* wou'd have it believ'd, that, by the Words THIS *Eclipſe*, thoſe learned Gentemen underſtood *it* to be the *ſame* as *that* of *Phlegon*'s: And yet who does not ſee, unleſs they do *ſo* underſtand it, as our *Anti-phl.* does, that all their kind Calculations do our *Anti-phl.*'s Cauſe no manner of Service? yet ſtill we may ſecurely depend upon the Calculations of ſuch accurate Aſtronomers. In ſhort then, as a *præternatural* Eclipſe cannot be calculated; ſo *Phlegon*'s will ever be ſo eſteem'd, [as it has been in all Ages hitherto] till our *Anti-phl.* CONCEIVES better; or brings

better

better *Vouchers* than his own *Dear ſelf*, for proving it to be a *Natural* one.

*B.* This confounding of the *two* Eclipſes, made me wonder very much, what this Gentleman cou'd mean, when, before I had read the *third* page quite over in his *Defence*, and before He had in the leaſt enter'd into the Merits of the Cauſe, in confuting what Mr. *Wh.* had ſaid; He roundly charges Mr. *Wh.* as if PHLEGON'S Eclipſe, *according to Him*, was Total and Central ſoon after *nine* in the Morning; whereas *Phlegon* had ſaid, that it was dark at the *ſixth Hour*, ſays our *Anti-phl.* i. e. at *twelve* at Noon. I knew the Charge was falſe, and that Mr. *Wh.* had made no ſuch *Computation*; turning therefore to his 48*th* page, I find Mr. *Wh.* ſays thus. 'PHLEGON's Eclipſe began at the *ſixth* 'Hour of the Day, or *noon*; as did the Darkneſs 'at our Saviour's Paſſion. But *Kepler*'s Eclipſe a-'bout the *ſecond* or *third* Hour, i. e. about 8 or 9 'o'clock in the Morning, or a little after Sunriſ-'ing: which *three* or *four* Hours, at that time of 'the Year, is a very great Difference.'

*A.* As to thoſe *three* or *four* Hours; I ſuppoſe Mr. *Wh.* will endeavour to ſet all to rights in his *March* Lectures; of which the News Papers are juſt now advertiſing us: and He will not fail, to be ſure, taking notice of ſuch foul Practice in our *Anti-phl.* He wou'd have had the World *conceive*, as He did at his firſt ſetting out in his *Defence*, that Mr. *Wh.* had been contradicting *Phlegon* in a very material point. The cunning of the Man, you ſee, was to prepoſſeſs his

Reader, that *Kepler*'s Eclipſe was the *ſame* as *Phlegon*'s; becauſe *Kepler*'s forſooth was now *going to be made out* to be about 12 *o'* clock, as well as *Phlegon*'s; and therefore, by a certain conſequence, they muſt, it ſeems be *one* and the *ſame* Eclipſe. 'The principal *Difficulty* therefore, ſays 'He, [p. 65.] which attended my former account, 'is now abſolutely removed: and every *Character* 'which *Phlegon* has mentioned, will agree to this 'Eclipſe. But Mr. *Wh.* need not be in any pain for the *five Characters* He has aſſign'd, (except the *4th*) notwithſtanding all that our *Anti-phl.* has or can ſay to the contray. I find, that *remarking* upon this Gentleman's *Defence*, begins now to be highly diſagreeable to you; tho' I dare ſay, you have ſome pleaſure, in ſeeing that our *Anti-phlegon*'s Cauſe appears to be much worſe by his *Defence, than it* did before. Permit me only to quote Him once more; I dare ſay, you'l own the Quotation to be as *Singular*, as any that you have heard? 'Tis not 'my Deſign, ſays He p. 48. to account for the '*Darkneſs*, which happen'd at the time of our Savi-'our's Paſſion. The Fact is owned; not from 'what *Eccleſiaſtical* Hiſtorians have ſaid upon this 'Occaſion, *who knew no more of the Matter than* '*we do now*; but from the Authority of the E-'vangeliſts, who are properly *Original Teſtimonies*, 'and the *only Authentic Records* about it; and from 'whom the *Fathers* had *all that they knew* about it.' Then follows the odd *Chorus* with a *ſingle* Voice---. 'What *I* contend for, ſays He, is (*without the con-'currence of Argument or Mathematician*) that the 'Eclipſe

'Eclipſe mention'd by *Phlegon* has no manner of 'relation to ſuch Darkneſs.' You ſee, here's work enough [was you in the humour to hear it] for a half Hour's Comment upon the ſeveral *Falſities* and *Abſurdities* contain'd in theſe few Lines. But I will not diſoblige you; and I know, your own good Senſe will ſoon make proper Reflections upon the whole; eſpecially conſidering the Diſcourſe, that has paſs'd between us this Day. You know, you have heard a good deal about *Authentic Records* and *original Teſtimonies:* Let me only remind you of Dr. *Clarke*'s own Words, which I repeated to you this Morning; [*a*] where He *owns* the *Fact* [the *Darkneſs*] not only from the *Evangeliſts*, but from other *Authentic Records*. The *Darkneſs* related by the *Evangeliſts*, is CONFIRMED *to us* [ſays He] *by concurrent Teſtimonies of profane and unqueſtionably unprejudic'd Authors.* Beſides, can it be imagin'd, that Dr. *Clarke*, with all his good Senſe, wou'd give an Ear to *ſuch Talk* as this; viz. *that the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians* [who had *Phlegon*'s Works, &c. lying before 'em] *Knew no* MORE *of the Matter than we do now, and that the Fathers knew* NOTHING *concerning this Darkneſs from any other Authentick Records beſides the Scriptures?* You ſee the Infatuation---- But I forbear.

*B.* I can't but take notice, what an averſion our *Anti-phl.* ſeems to have for thoſe old *Eccleſiaſticks*, that either conſulted the *Records* at *Rome*, at *Nicomedia* &c. or elſe read *Phlegon*'s Works; and by that



[*a*] *Boyle*'s Lectures, p. 354, 355. Id. 7.

means often apply'd the Eclipſe ſo recorded to the *miraculous* Darkneſs mention'd by the Evangeliſts. But whence ſo much ſpite and rancour to thoſe venerable Perſons who were inſtrumental in conveying down to us the *ſacred Writings* themſelves, as well as ſuch Account of the *Eclipſe* from *Authentick* Records? Why muſt the *Acts* of *Pilate*, which *Juſtin M.* and *Tertullian* talk of, be cenſur'd as coming out of the *ſame mint with other Forgeries?* Why are thoſe great Men [Defenders of our common Faith] to be *ſtigmatiz'd*, as having done *ſome odd things* or (*b*] other, that *ſeem'd to make ſtrongly for their Cauſe?* And why are *they*, amongſt others of the *ſecond* and *third* Centuries, repreſented (*c*) as Men, that had got a *ſcurfy trick of lying for God's ſake?* Surely there muſt be ſome *extraordinary* Reaſon for ſo much *inveteracy* againſt theſe primitive Writers: And I want ſadly to know, whether ſuch *Reflections* as theſe were *part* of the Converſation between our *Anti-phl.* and Dr. *Clarke*, when the latter was prevail'd on to *caſtrate* his *Boyle's* Lectures.

*A.* 'Tis highly reaſonable to think ſo: But you ſee, matters being ſo order'd, that there was no opportunity to be given of *appealing* to the *Dr.* It appears however from the *Doctor's* Works, that He did not *like* thoſe *two Fathers*, no more than our *Anti-phl.* does. We may reaſonably judge, He was willing enough to have a *ſlur* caſt upon *them*, if any Perſon wou'd do *that* dirty Work for Him;

(*b*) Diſſert. p. 39, 40.

(*c*) Def. p. 21.

Him: But He knew better, than to treat *them* with ſuch vile, opprobious Language himſelf. I ſhall ſhew you, when I have next the pleaſure of ſeeing you here, that *Juſtin M.* in particular gave Dr. *Clarke* ſo much Diſturbance, that He was forc'd ſome times to *mangle* the *Martyr*'s Arguments, as his Enemies had done his Body; or juſt, as ſome of our *Witts* do, when they make *David* an *Atheiſt*; in leaving *out* the firſt part of the Sentence, and ſaying [what none but a *Fool* wou'd have ſaid] *There is no God.* But grant, that the *Dr.* did not *hearken* to ſuch vile *ſuggeſtions* concerning the *Fathers*, as our *Anti-phl.* has given them out to the World; methinks, it ſhou'd be incumbent upon Him, now the *Dr.* is dead, to ſay as *much*; or that it was *purely* by dint of Argument, that He was induced to think as He did upon the Matter: And (if it be not a favour too great to be ask'd) let Him ſpeak out plainly, what thoſe *ſome other things* were, (as He expreſſes Himſelf, in the firſt page of his *Introduction*) *which upon that occaſion* (*He ſays*) *He ſuggeſted to the Dr.* But whatever He ſhall determine with Himſelf to do in theſe matters; there is one thing, I'm very ſure He ought to do; and that is doing juſtice to thoſe injur'd *Fathers*; chiefly to that excellent Religion, of which He profeſſes Himſelf to be a Member; as well by *acknowledging* ſuch *Facts*, as are of real *Importance* to Chriſtianity, to be as they are by *them* repreſented, unleſs He is able to bring good *Subſtantial proof* to the contrary; (which I am very ſure, He never can) as alſo by declaring, that He

gives

gives his *hearty assent* to such Explanations or Expositions of any *Fundamental* Article of our Faith, as have been given by those venerable Persons; who lived so near the Fountain Head, and may therefore be allow'd to have had a more thorough Knowledge of the sense and meaning of the *Scriptures*, than we have. And as a *Test* of this, I'l just give you a passage out of each of those *Fathers* (*Justin* M: and *Tertullian*) that you may occasionally propose *'em*; and by that means learn perhaps what He and His Admirers have to say to such *Passages*.

*B*. I like the thought extreamly; and surely 'tis highly reasonable, there should be such a *Test*; notwithstanding, He tells his Reader, that He has writ *Essays upon the Truth of the Christian Religion*. Please to go on --- you need not now apologize, as if trespassing upon my Patience; for I hear you with the same pleasure, as I did, when I met you in the *Park* this Morning.

*A*. The *passage* from *Iustin* M. relates to *Prophecies* concerning Christ; which, in his *Apology*, He acquaints the *Gentiles* with from the *old Testament*; and then *appeals* to the *Acts* of *Pontius Pilate*, whether it was not related in *them*, how Christ did actually perform such *Miracles*, as had been so *prophecy'd* of Him. I give you Mr. *Reeves*'s Translation, in *both passages*; and now and then his own excellent *Notes*. Now the *Martyr* apprizes the *Gentiles*, as follows; 'There were of old, 'among the Jews, certain Prophets of God, 'by whom the prophetic Spirit made Procla-

'mation

'mation of things to come, long before they 'were in being. Theſe Prophecies, juſt as they 'were deliver'd, were committed to writing by 'the Prophets themſelves in their own *Hebrew* 'Mother Tongue, and the Books put into the 'Cuſtody of the Kings of *Judea* then in being. — 'Now, in theſe Books of the *Prophets* we find 'it foretold, that there was *one* a coming into 'the World, who being born of a *Virgin* and 'grown up to Man's Eſtate, ſhou'd *cure every* '*Diſeaſe* and *Malady in Nature, raiſe the Dead* '&c. *At his coming* (Iſ. 35. 5, 6.) *the lame ſhall* '*leap like a Stag; and the Tongue of the Dumb* '*ſhall be Eloquent; the Lepers ſhall be cleanſed:* '*and the Dead ſhall riſe and walk about.*' And 'how He perform'd theſe *Miracles*, you may ea-'ſily be ſatisfied from the *Acts* (1) of *Pontius Pilate*. You may remember, we had a good deal of diſcourſe, the laſt time, about theſe *Acts* of *Pilate*; for which I muſt refer to your own (2) *Notes*. With what an aſſuming air, and unparallell'd confidence, has our *Anti-phl.* diſcarded theſe *Acts* of *Pilate*, containing ſuch important *Teſtimonies* taken from *Heathen* Records? Is the World to be told, and *only* told (without the leaſt ſhadow of an *Argument* for diſproving the *Fact*) that *thoſe Acts* of *Pilate have no foundation* (3) *of probability*? that *Juſtin* M. and *Tertullian* were weak *good* Men,

(1) See Mr. *Reeves*'s Tranſlation of *Juſtin* M's *Apology*, p. 61, 62, 86.

(2) Conf. IV. p.

(3) Diſſert. p. 37, 39.

Men, yet *errant cheats*; and that they *PUT* ſuch things as theſe upon poor *Pilate*? Surely 'tis high time for this Gentleman to make *Satisfaction* for the *great Indignity* offer'd to thoſe glorious *Lights* of the Chriſtian Church. But if this is not to be done; He ought to conſider, that *even Woolſton* Himſelf has reckon'd Him amongſt the *Unbelievers* for (4) denying *theſe ACTS* of *Pilate*. *Woolſton* makes his *unbeliever* talk thus; 'Tis uncertain 'that *Pilate* ever writ at all to *Tiberius* of Chriſt 'Jeſus. *So* 'tis poſſible (5) (ſays our *Anti-phl.*) 'that *Pilate* might give an account to *Tiberius* 'of the Death of Chriſt: But that He wrote the 'Things *&c.* Suppoſing *Pilate* might write, (ſays '*Woolſton*'s Unbeliever) it is yet more uncertain, 'what things He wrote of *Him*: for *that* Letter 'is long ſince loſt; and as to what the *Fathers* 'do ſay of it, I will not [ſays his *Unbeliever*] 'believe one Word of it.' I own to you, that I had not ſeen this piece of Mr. *Woolſton*'s, when I lately talk'd to you from Bp *Pearſon* and others, about theſe *ACTS* of *Pilate*: But I think, it may not be amiſs now, when you next hear any of your old *Fraternity* talking againſt theſe *ACTS* of *Pilate*, to ask 'em what they have to object to the Arguments, that their *Friend Woolſton* makes uſe of upon that head. 'tis very probable, they'l give no more heed to *Woolſton*, than they did to Dr. *Clarke*, when you ſlily attack'd 'em

[4] See *Woolſton*'s old Appology reviv'd; p. 35, &c.

[5] ib. p. 37.

'*em* in his *own* Words; or perhaps will refer you (for an anſwer) to their *ſecond* intended *Quarto*. However, don't deſpair in either Caſe; and preſs home as vigorouſly the *Arguments* of *Woolſton*, as you did thoſe of *Clarke*,. The *Arguments* of the former are digeſted under theſe *three* Heads; 1. In conſidering what were the *things*, that *Pilate* muſt needs Know of *Chriſt Jeſus*. 2. In proving, that *Pilate* muſt needs write to *Tiberius* of the *things* that He knew of Him; and that it was impoſſible, but that he ſhould write of ſuch and ſuch things to Him. 3. In proving, that Chriſt, in the contents of this Letter of *Pilate*'s, was manifeſted to *Tiberius* as a moſt *true God*; who did juſtly claim Adoration and Worſhip from *Him*: and his leave to let the People depart from *Idolatry* to his Service. Our Time is too far ſpent, to ſay any more of this *piece*; I think it by much the beſt *piece*, which *that* unfortunate Perſon wrote; long before He, (*a*) fell to *blaſpheme*. The Book lies near you; and you may take it home; and I don't doubt, but, with what you have heard me ſay already, you'l ſoon be maſter of the Argument ſo far, that neither your *Anti-phl.* nor any of his Friends will be able to cope with you.

*B.* Sr. I thank you. I believe, I ſhall ſoon have a rencounter with ſome of our young *Libertines*; but their *Line*, I'm apt to think, goes



(*a*) This Book was printed at the Univerſity Preſs, *Cambridge*, in the year 1705. ſo ſays the Writer of his Life.

no deeper than our *Anti-phl*'s has done. Shou'd I happen to meet again the *old blear Ey'd Deiſt*, I took notice of in the Morning, there might perhaps ſome Honour redound, from ſuch an Engagement. But whatever ſhall be the Event in that particular; I will not fail, ſome way or other, of throwing out theſe *Teſt-paſſages*, in order to get the beſt intelligence I can, in what manner *they* are receiv'd. Pleaſe to give me the other *Paſſage*, you promis'd me, from *Tertullian*, and then I'l take my Leave.

*A.* The *other* relates to the *Divinity* of the Son of God; his being of the *ſame Nature* and *Eſſence* with God the *Father*. You find it thus in *Tertullian*'s Apologetick — (1) 'I have already 'ſaid, that God reared this Fabrick of the World 'out of Nothing, by his *Word*, Wiſdom or Power; 'and 'tis evident, that your Sages of old were of 'the *ſame* opinion, that the Λόγος, *i. e.* the *Word* 'or the Wiſdom was the maker of the Univerſe: 'For *Zeno* determines the *Logos* to be the Creator 'and adjuſter of every thing in nature. The ſame '*Logos*, He affirms, is called by the name of *Fate*, '*God*, *Mind* of Jove, and *Neceſſity* of all things. '*Cleanthes* will have the Author of the World to 'be a *Spirit* which pervades every part of it. 'And We *Chriſtians* alſo do affirm a *Spirit* to be 'the proper ſubſtance of the *Logos*; by whom all things

[1] See Mr. *Reeves*'s Tranſlation of *Tertullian*'s Apologetick, P. 256, 257, 258.

' things were made; in which He ſubſiſted before
' *He* was *ſpoken* (2) *out*; and was the *Wiſdom* that
' aſſiſted at the Creation, and the *Power* that preſi-
' ded over the whole Work. The *Logos* or Word,
' iſſuing forth from that *ſpiritual* Subſtance at
' the Creation of the World, and generated by
' *that* Iſſuing or Progreſſion, is for this *reaſon*
' call'd the *Son of God*; and *the God*, from his
' *Unity* of *Subſtance* with God the Father: for God
' is a *Spirit*. An imperfect Image of this you have
' in the *derivation of a Ray* from the *Body of the*
' *Sun*: for this Ray is a *part* without any diminu-
' tion of the whole; but the Sun is always in the
' Ray, becauſe the Ray is always from the Sun;
' nor is the *Subſtance ſeparated*, but only extended.
' Thus is it, in ſome meaſure, in the *eternal Ge-*
*neration*

(2) There is a *threefold* Generation of the *Son of God* frequently mention'd by the Primitive Writers. The *Firſt* is the true and proper Generation of the *Son*, which was from the *Father* before all Worlds. The *ſecond* is the *progreſſion* of the *Logos* from his Father at the Creation; which they call προβολὴ, ἔκχυσις &c. The *third* was at his Incarnation in the Womb of the bleſſed Virgin overſhadow'd by the Power of the moſt High. The *Second* Kind of Generation, is that which *Tertullian* hints at in this place. For the fuller ſatisfaction in this point, I adviſe the Reader to conſult Bp *Bull*'s incomparable Defence of the *Nicene Faith* (C. 5) concerning the *Coeternity* of the *Son*. And ſo likewiſe, *Cap.* 7. Sect. 5. where He will find ſeveral things in this place *clear'd*, and our Author vindicated beyond exception, as to the Doctrine of the *Conſubſtantiality* of the *Son*.

'*neration* of the *Logos.* He is a Spirit of a Spirit; '(3) a *God of God*; as one Light is generated by 'another; the Original, Parent Light remaining 'entire and undiminiſhed, notwithſtanding the 'Communication of itſelf to many other Lights. 'Thus it is, that the *Logos*, which *came forth 'from God, is both God and the Son of God. and 'THOSE TWO ARE ONE.*' Hence it is, that 'a Spirit of a Spirit, or a *God* of *God*, makes ano-'ther in *mode* of *Subſiſtence*, but not in *number*; 'in *order* of Nature, but not in Numericalneſs 'or *Identity* of *Eſſence*: and ſo the Son, is ſu-'bordinate to the Father, as He comes from 'Him as the Principle, but is never Separated. 'Him therefore (Chriſt) they could not ſee (ſays '*Tertullian*:) to be a *God* in the humble Diſ-'guiſe of a *Man*; yet ſeeing the Miracles He 'did, they cry'd Him down for a *Conjurer*; for 'dealing with the Devil, when He was turn-'ing the Devils out of all their poſſeſſions at 'a Word's ſpeaking: and with the ſame Word 'bid Sight return to the *blind*, and it return'd; 'and cleanſed the *Leapers*; and new-braced the '*Paralytick* Joynts; and Spoke the *Dead* to Life; 'and made the Elements obey; ſtilling the 'Storms; and walking upon the Seas; and de-'monſtating Himſelf to be the *Logos* of God. *&c.*

*B.*

(3) This Similitude of a Ray from the Sun, or a Light from a Light, is not to be look'd upon as a full and adequate Illuſtration of the *Mode*, how the Son of God was generated by the Father, nor will any thing in Nature give us

*B.* Sir If I may be allow'd to conjecture; our *Anti-phl·* will never care to attone for his *Offences* againſt the *Fathers*, by giving you or any one elſe ſatisfaction, as to theſe *two Teſt-paſſages*. I'm rather inclin'd to think, that He'l try to improve upon *Daille* and ſome other of your four Writers againſt the *Fathers*, in giving theſe ancient Writers ſtill more *hard Words* (if poſſible) than He has yet done; ſooner than be *explicit* as to this *Fundamental* Point; no otherwiſe *explicit* I dare ſay, than you are to ſuppoſe Him to have been already by *Subſcriptions* &c. And how far, or in what manner ſuch *Subſcriptions* have of late Years been thought *obligatory*, is a Subject too extenſive, to be enquir'd into at preſent. All that I farther requeſt of you, is, that ſince Dr. *Clarke* is not alive to ſpeak for Himſelf; nor are we likely to know from any one what He did ſpeak on this Head; that you will pleaſe to *recapitulate*, from what He has ſaid in His *Boyle's* Lectures concerning this *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon*; what the Sum and Strength of his Argument

a perfect repreſentation of it" 'Tis what *Juſtin* M. and others have choſen to repreſent it by; nor do I know a better to make this incomprehenſible *Myſtery* apprehended: Which is all they drive at; and it ſerves ſufficiently to declare *their Senſe and notion of it*, namely, that *Chriſt from all Eternity did coexiſt with the Father*, as Light does with the Sun; that He was *God of God*, without any diminution of the Divine Subſtance, as one Light is kindled from another &c. 'Tis evident likewiſe, from this Expreſſion, of *God of God, or Light of Light*, what the notion of the *Fathers* was about the *Divinity of Chriſt, before the Eſtabliſhment of the* Nicene *Fathers*; who make uſe of this Expreſſion in their Creed.

ment is, for *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe being *præternatural*; and what our *Anti-phl.* has advanc'd, on the contrary, for it's being a *Natural* one.

*A.* The *Arguments* on both ſides ſtand thus; and at one view, you are left to determine upon the whole, after what you have heard each Day.

Dr. *Clarke* argues thus;

1. THE *miraculous* Darkneſs at our Saviour's Crucifixion (mention'd by the Evangeliſts) is one of thoſe particulars that are CONFIRMED *by concurrent Teſtimonies* of profane and unqeſtionably unprejudic'd Authors.

2. The *miraculous Darkneſs*, that happen'd at our Saviour's Paſſion was recorded in the *publick Roman Regiſters*.

Dr. *Sykes* argues thus;

1. 'TIS a moſt groſs *Impoſition* on the Reader, to call ſuch *Teſtimonies Original*, which were not wrote till very many Years after the *Facts* happen'd. The Evangeliſts are the *only true* Witneſſes of the *Facts*, that happen'd at Chriſt's Paſſion. As to the Debate about *Phle*'s *Teſtimony*, it ſtands (*notwithſtanding ſuch concurrent Teſtimonies*) upon the *probabilities* on one ſide or other.

2. Thoſe *public* Records were *ſecret Accounts*: The Paſſage in *Tertullian*, that is quoted by Dr. *Clarke* is not *Authentic*. ALL that the Fathers *had*

3. Such *miraculous* Darkneſs at Chriſt's Death, is, in a particular manner, atteſted to by *Phlegon* in his *Olympiads*.

4. Such *miraculous* Darkneſs at Chriſt's Death, was commonly *Appeal'd* to by the firſt Chriſtian Writers.

5. *Tertullian* and *Origen* are two particular *Authorities*, who have *Appeal'd*, either to the *had* concerning ſuch *Darkneſs*, was from the Evangeliſts.

3. *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe happen'd in the XVth of *Tiberius*, about *three* Years before Chriſt's Paſſion and therefore was a *Natural* Eclipſe. The primitive Writers thought that Chriſt died in the XVth of *Tiberius* alſo; And therefore they muſt ſo conceive of *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe, as *Natural*, happening in that Year.

4. 'Tis a *Weakneſs* which learned Men have for many Centuries maintained, and ſtill maintain. What harm can enſue, if you *ſhew*, that any Man, Antient or Modern, has been miſtaken? 'Tis a very proper Work for a *Miniſter* of the *Goſpel*.

5. *Tertullian* has PUT UPON the World, in regard to the *Acts* of *Pilate*; and therefore not *Phlegon*

*Roman Records* or to *Phlegon*, concerning ſuch *miraculous* Darkneſs.

6. When the firſt Chriſtian Writers thus *Appeal'd*, either to the *Roman Records* or to *Phlegon* concerning this *miraculous* Darkneſs, *it is what none of their Adverſaries cou'd deny themſelves.*

to be credited in this Matter. *Origen*'s Latin *Tranſlation* of his Commentary on *Mat.* (*tho' written long* before *his Original Greek Defence againſt Celſus*) ought to be regarded rather than the *other*.

6. Thoſe *Adverſaries not denying the Fact, might be owing to their not knowing better at that Time*: However, it *now appears*, that *Phlegon*'s Eclipſe was a *Natural* one; and therefore, expunging *it* out of Dr. *Clarke*'s, *Boyle*'s Lectures; and *denying* the concurrent *Teſtimonies* of *Phlegon*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, &c. is the *beſt Service that can be done for Chriſtianity*, *next to the proving it to be true*; which I have *endeavour'd* to do ---- (†)

(†) Καλὰ τὸ δυναλὸν, as He remarks upon *Origen*.

*B.* Sir

*B.* Sir If my memory ſerves me right, you have (with an agreeable *contraſte*) made theſe *two* Authors realy ſpeak in their *own* Words; at leaſt, I'm very ſure, you have done them ſo far Juſtice, as not to miſrepreſent *their* true Senſe and Meaning upon this Subject. Now when we ſee *both* their Arguments [thus contracted] at one view; is it not *Sceptical* in the higheſt Degree; is it not monſtrous, to make the leaſt doubt, on which ſide the *Truth* lies? And yet, with what *front* has this *Anti-phl.* been telling the World, and perſiſting in it too till He can hold out no longer; that ſuch *bagatelle* Arguments as theſe, wrought a conviction upon the mind of the learned Dr. *S. Clarke*; and permitting the 8*th* Edition of his *Boyle*'s Lectures to appear *caſtrated* in ſo baſe a manner, after his Death? This *Teſtimony* of *Phlegon* therefore, being of ſuch Importance, cou'd not, wou'd not have been *parted* with by Dr. *Clarke*, nor He have been ſo hard preſs'd by our *Anti-phl.* for the doing it; except for *other Reaſons*, that are obvious enough to be gueſs'd at: And, if it ſhall appear accordingly, at our next meeting, that Dr. *Clarke*'s *Inſincerity* was very *great* in *other* Matters of high Importance, (as you have already intimated, and told the World of [*thirteen* or *fourteen* Years ago from the *Preſs*) I ſhall then the leſs wonder at *this*. I hope, our next Meeting will ſoon fall out: For *Lucian*'s *Philopatris, and the two MSS.* of *Verona* and *Windſor*, are very often in my thoughts; and I want extremely to know the uſe you'l make of all *three*, in clearing up the *Genuineneſs* of that controverted Text, 1 John, 5: 7. *There*

*are Three that bear Record in Heaven*, &c. I the rather deſire it, becauſe it ſeems to be *freſh Evidence* for the *Text*; and I wiſh, our *firſt Reformers* had known *it*; for then this *verſe* would not have ſtood with a *Parentheſis*; as 'tis ſeen to do in *ſome* of our old *Engliſh* Bibles: which is a matter, that may deſerve your conſideration, when I have next the pleaſure of ſeeing you. I find, *Luther* would not put *it* in at all, in any Edition of his *German* Bible.

*A.* The reſpective *Authorities*, that you mention, lie all ready before you upon the Table; and I hope, you'l ſoon find me making ſuch a proper uſe of *them*, as to give you that Satisfaction which I obſerve you are very *Solicitous* for having in this Affair. The *Scruples* likewiſe that our *firſt Reformers* appear to have had about *it*, ſhall be fully conſider'd: and, I hope, entirely removed for the future. Had the learned and judicious Mr. *Martin* of *Utrecht* liv'd to ſee the *Verona* MS. you wou'd probably have ſeen the Matter plac'd in a ſtronger Light; and the ſame uſe made of *this*, as was, (a little before his Death) of the *Greek MS.* found at *Dublin*, in the Univerſity Library; formerly belonging to the great *Primate*, A. Bp. *Uſher*, who run over all the moſt conſiderable Places in *England* (as the Writer of his *Life* tells us) for getting the beſt Books, and the moſt valuable *MSs.* His Library ſuffer'd very much in the *Civil* Wars; which occaſion'd it's being often remov'd from one Place to another, and at laſt carried into *Ireland*, and plac'd at *Dublin*, where it now is. This antient

*MS.*

*MS.* as it has this controverted *Text* in it; ſo *it gives me no ſmall Joy* (ſays Mr. *Martin*) *to ſee the ſacred Text, which found ſo many Contradictors, ariſe from the obſcurity, in which* it *had lain hid with the* MS. *that contains it.* This was communicated to Mr. *Martin* by Mr. *Ycard* the worthy Dean of *Aconry* at *Dublin*, with a very exact Atteſtation of the Librarian Mr. *Wm. Lewis.* The ſame has ſince been communicated to me by another Hand: And when this Matter comes to be farther enquir'd into, at our next Meeting; this *MS.* will appear to be the ſame with the *Montfortian* taken notice of in our *Polyglott* Bible. The antient *MS.* of *Caſſiodore* (a *Work* that Dr. *Cave* gave over, as *loſt*) in conjunction with this *Dublin* MS. will ſtill be a ſtronger Evidence for the *genuineneſs* of this *Text*: And don't fancy, that the Cauſe ſuffers at all, becauſe *that* of *Caſſiodore* is in *Latin*; for tho' He writ in that Language, He was converſant, as I told you to Day, with the beſt and moſt *antient Greek* Copies as well as *Latin* ones. *Pere Simon* indeed (the greateſt Adverſary, that *this Text* ever met with, and whom all the *Free-thinking* Gentry are known to have copy'd after) has laid down the following *Rule* as a ſure and good one to go by, in judging of the Validity of a *MS.* viz. 'The moſt antient *Greek* 'Copies of the *New Teſta.* that We have at *preſent* 'are not the *beſt*; ſince they are conformable to thoſe '*Latin* Copies, which St. *Jerom* found ſo ALTER'D, that He judg'd it convenient to reform them. (†) Let now our *Arians* then talk as they pleaſe about the *Antiquity* of this *Dublin Greek* MS. 'tis evident



(†) See P. *Simon*'s pref. to the Crit. Hiſt. of the *New-Teſtament.*

*that*, and this *Latin* one at *Verona* (which we ſhall prove to be conformable to the *Italic Verſion* made in the *ſecond* Century) do both retain this Paſſage of the *Cæleſtial Teſtimonies* in St. *John*'s Epiſtle; and do agree likewiſe with the Bible of St. *Jerom*. But this is not a proper time for diſcuſſing theſe things. However, I am pleas'd to ſee you expreſſing a more than ordinary concern for having the *Genuineneſs* of this Text eſtabliſh'd in the ſtrongeſt Manner poſſible: For I can by no means think, as ſome do, that 'tis a Thing indifferent whether *this Text* be prov'd *genuine* or no; becauſe, ſay they, there are *other Texts* that ſecure the *Doctrine* of the *Bleſſed Trinity*. Mr *Martin* has well obſerv'd, that this does not ſeem a *ſufficient* Reaſon for giving up the great Advantage *this Paſſage* affords us. *There is danger*, ſays He, *in the Experiment; beſides, that the ſurrender is too cheap, and We hereby pay a complaiſance to the Hereſy, that this Text encounters; which in no wiſe it deſerves.* I therefore ſo far agree with the modeſt Mr. *Emlyn* in his *Addreſs* made (not many Years ago) to † both Houſes of *Convocation*, (p. 42.) that *adding* to, or *diminiſhing* from the *ſacred Writings*, is a Matter that highly concerns every one to think of, and to guard againſt. If this *Text* (1 *John* 5. 7.) be not *Canonical* (for the *Epiſtle* in general has *always* been allow'd to be ſo) We ought to reject *it* for that very Reaſon, becauſe 'tis *not Scripture*: But if the *Authenticity* of the Verſe is found to be thoroughly eſtabliſh'd, notwithſtanding

(†) See His Enquiry into the Original Authority of 1 *John* 5. 7. Addreſs'd to both Houſes of *Convocation*. 1716.

withſtanding the *Silence* of ſome antient Writers, or *Omiſſions* in ſome *Greek MSs.* We ought to be as *zealous* in contending for *that* part of *Holy Scripture*, as for any other. It is 'high *time* (ſays a learned *Prelate* now liv-'ing §) that this celebrated paſſage 1 *John*, 5. 7. 'ſhould be examin'd with the greateſt accuracy: 'that either its *Authority* may be ſatisfactorily 'vindicated; or be fairly given up for an *Interpo-'lation*, if *it* is not capable of being defended.

*B.* 'Tis that very *Addreſs* of *Emlyn*'s, Sir, that has made me ſo anxious and ſollicitous, and expreſs my ſelf with ſo much concern (as you now took notice of) for having the *Genuineneſſe* of this *Text* ſett'l'd beyond the power of *contradiction*; I mean, when there ſhall not be any colour of Reaſon or Argument left to Support *it*. Mr. *Emlyn*, in that *Addreſs*, lays a great ſtreſs upon what Dr. *Mills* has ſaid in his *Diſſertation* upon *this Text*, which I hope, you will conſider and remark upon. I find the Doctor's opinion clear and expreſs againſt this *Writer*, tho' *Emlyn* would have the *Engliſh* Reader to believe Him *wavering*; and upon the Doctor's ſtating the Caſe on both ſides, I obſerve, He founds this *Addreſs*; wherein, you know, He arrogantly requires of the Bps. and Clergy of *England* to *Decree* in *Convocation*, that, for the future, this *Text* ſhould not be inſerted into the Editions of this Epiſtle of St. *John*. And ſeeing the *Convocation* would not comply with the

§ An Enquiry into the Authority of the Primitive *Complutenſian* Edition of the *New Teſt.* in a Letter to Dr. *Bentley* 1722.

the Requeſt of the modeſt Mr. *Emlyn*, (as you call Him) He, or ſome of his Fraternity, have ſince thought fit to give the World ſuch an *Edition* of the *New Teſtament*; wherein *this Text* is *ſtruck* out according to their own Will and pleaſure; dedicated to the preſent Lord High *Chancellor* of great *Brittaine*; and the many Blunders, falſe Verſions, and fallacious notes contain'd in *that* Edition (I need not tell you) have been lately detected and publickly cenſur'd by a very able Hand. ¶

*A.* 'Tis true; ſuch an *Edition* of the *New Teſtament* (to our ſhame be it ſpoken) makes its Appearance both in Town and Country. It pleaſes our *Free-thinkers*; who yet want to get rid of the *whole*. *Caſtrations* alone won't ſerve their purpoſe; no more than *thoſe* made by our *Anti-phl*: will give *them* full and entire Satisfaction, till He farther proceeds, and trys to confute the *whole* of what Dr. *Clarke* has offer'd in his *Boyle's* Lectures, in behalf of *Reveal'd Religion*. Some *Queries* of your pious *Hibernian Addreſſer*, and his *Harranguing* about this *Text*, are pretty remarkable. In one Place He expreſſes Himſelf thus; (*ib. p.* 49) 'If your *Lordſhips* and 'the Revd. *Clergy* don't think this *Text* to be cer-'tainly *ſpurious*; I wou'd humbly propoſe whether 'it be not *moſt likely* to be ſo? And then whether 'it be not ſafer to put it *out*, than to keep it in the '*place* 'tis *in?* Nay, whether it be not at leaſt *du-'bious*? And then, whether it ought not to be '*mark'd* as *ſuch*, for your People's obſervation? I 'beſeech

¶ ſee the Revd. Mr. *Leon. Twells* his Critical Examination &c.

'beſeech you, let us but obtain *ſo much* as I think *your ſelves* will, and as the *firſt* Reformers did ſee 'to be juſt and *reaſonable*; or *convince* us, this Re-'queſt is not *ſo*: Elſe what remains, but to *ſit down*, *wonder*, and *deſpair*? 'Tis but an eaſier 'Step [and will be well *warranted*] to return to 'that which our *firſt Reformers* wiſely and unblam-'ably did. It can be no reproach, to be as juſt 'to the People as they were; and to return again 'with *Reaſon*, to that which has been alter'd *with-'out Reaſon*---'tis certain, the common People have 'their Eyes upon *this*, more than on any undoubt-'ed *Text* in the Bible, in this Controverſy. And 'ſo far they muſt be deceived, *if it be ſpurious*. 'And it is in your *Lordſhips* and the *Clergy*'s pow-'er to let them know it; and to refer 'em to *other 'Texts*, which you can *aſſure* them are *genuine*.---- 'It might indeed, in *your Wiſdom*, ſeem meet to 'wait a while, to ſee what coul'd be ſaid in Defence 'of *the Words*; which are charg'd to be an *Inter-'polation* of the true and ſacred Text; before the 'Convocation ſhould determine what to do with 'them. But, ſince no Man has attempted it 'to any purpoſe; and all ſeem ſilent under 'the Imputation of ſo great a wrong done 'to the Holy Scripture, and the Church of 'God, *&c.*' Thus far the *Refugié*. The *Con-vocation*, notwithſtanding his loud Exclamations, *dropt* the Affair. Whether the ſame *Prudence* ought to be continu'd, muſt be left to the Judg-ment of our *Superiours*. For my own part, I I can't but wiſh, a *Convocation* might ſoon take

this

this and other Matters into their ſerious Conſideration; and remedy ſome *Evils*, which otherways may prove *fatal*. *Righteouſneſs will exalt a Nation* &c. was the ſaying, you know, of a wiſe King; and the truth of it has appear'd in the various changes, that the greateſt *Monarchies* of the World have ſince undergon. 'Tis now time to wiſh you well home: the ſooner you return, the more obliging will be the viſit. Only take theſe two Words along with you---Be every day upon your guard againſt the *well thumb'd Quarto*; and don't forget, that you have been threatn'd with a *Second* Volume. *Adieu.*




FINIS.

Lately publiſh'd, The *Regius* Profeſſor *Whitaker's* unanſwerable *Arguments* ( made *Engliſh* ) againſt *Popery*. To which are ſubjoyn'd ſeaſonable *Remarks* on a late boaſted *Popiſh* Performance, Entituled, *England's Converſion and Reformation compar'd*, &c. which is chiefly borrowed from *Parſons* the Jeſuite.